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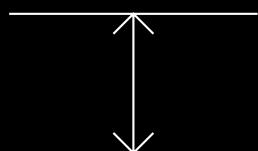


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ON THE COVER:

ROMAIN FEBVRE IS CHALLENGING FOR THE MXGP TITLE IN HIS ROOKIE YEAR IN THE BIG BIKE CLASS
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RYAN DUNGEY'S BEEN ALMOST UNSTOPPABLE IN HIS QUEST TO PICK UP ANOTHER 450 AMA TITLE
© FRANK HOPPEN



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COMMENT

Each and every dirt bike rider that I've ever met – and I've met one or two in my time – seem pretty much obsessed with seeing themselves in action whether it be in photographs or on video. While technology makes that totally achievable for the masses these days mostly thanks to Smartphone technology it used to be the case that it was a real struggle to get decent pictures unless you had a family member who owned an SLR camera.

For the rest of us we had to live in hope that a professional photographer would turn up at the track and then snap you and sell you an image – of varying quality depending on who it was that took it – either on the same day or at a later date. I've lost count of the number of times I've looked at boards and boards of photographs in the hope that they had just one of me. Sometimes I'd get lucky and sometimes I wouldn't.

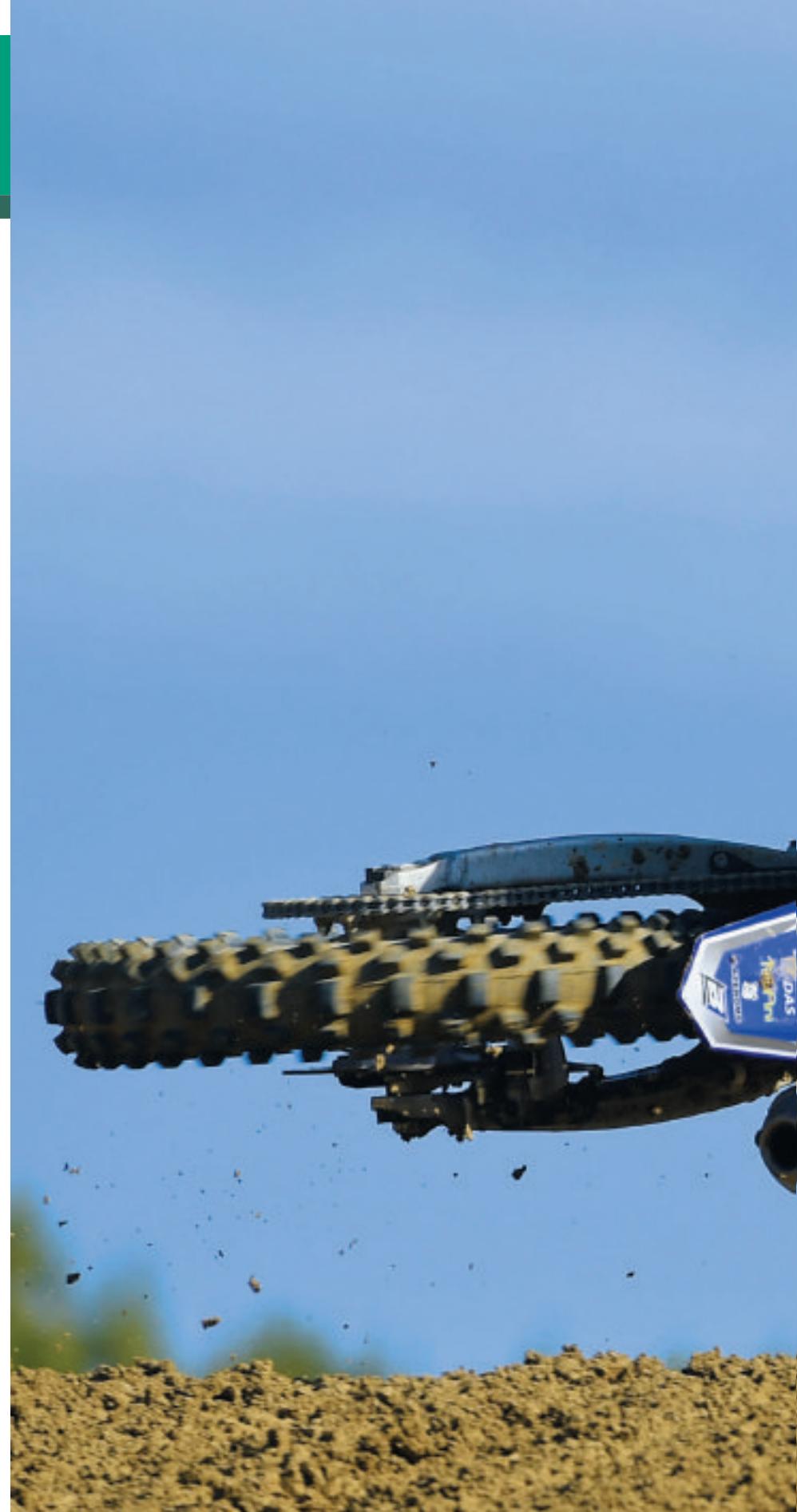
I've still got the majority of the images that I – well, my dad – bought over the years and after a little investigation it seems that the best ones all seem to have the same gold sticker on the back. That sticker states that it was taken and printed by a company called Action Sport Photography which I believe is based near Bristol which is weird because these photos were taken all over the place – Hawkstone Park, Norley, Marshfield, Weston-super-Mare, Matchams and so on.

So why am I telling you this? Well, when I was pestering our regular columnist Dan Grove for an action picture we could use in his column he piped up with 'I'll have a look on the Action Sport website' then proceeded to show me a selection of shots that he liked the look of.

While I was sniffing around the site (it's www.actionsport.co.uk by the way) I found that the owner/photographer – a guy called Ray Smith – had been supplying this service since 1993 and is still supplying sweet shots to the masses today.

It's mind boggling to think just how many times he's hit the shutter button over the years and just how many riders have an Action Sport image of their own that they still treasure today. The best bit is that if you've ever been shot by Ray at any of the events that are listed on his website then you can still buy a copy from him today!

So by my reckoning if there were such a thing as a Motocross MBE for services to the off-road community then Ray Smith would definitely be deserving of one. If you're a retired racer like me who wishes that they had more memorabilia to remember their racing by then have a trawl through the list of events that Ray has covered – you might just get lucky and find yourself a real gem...



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Valentin Guillod's sick skills have
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TONY

CAIROLI



BROKEN BONES CAN'T STOP THE CHAMP BUT THEY WILL DEFINITELY SLOW HIM . . .

Hey folks! After the race at Matterley Basin where I took my second win of the year, we went to France and Villars sous Ecot. This was a classic track 20 years ago but has now completely changed and is really different to what it was. I don't think that many people were happy with the work they did on the track – it was completely flat, stony and really hardpack... Despite this the race went well and I was again on the podium closing the gap on the championship leader.

The next race was the Grand Prix of Italy at the special venue of Maggiora. I wanted to do really well for my home fans as they come from everywhere in Italy and it doesn't matter if it's raining or if it's sunny – there are always massive crowds.

However, motocross is motocross and you never know what can happen! Just when I was feeling better and stronger there was disaster waiting just around the corner! During the first lap of the qualifying race – just a few corners after I took the holeshot – I had a crash. It was just a small crash but the consequences were really serious.

I went to the hospital in the ambulance after visiting the mobile clinic at the track. The verdict was not the best and they said that two little bones were fractured and that I would have to wait the night and await the decision of the officials the day after in order to know if I could race or not.

As it was the night was horrible and it was not an easy decision to ride on Sunday but I wanted to do it for many reasons. First of all for

all the fans that were coming to see the race – I was feeling really bad for them because they came to see me race and I didn't want to let them go home without having seen me in action.

Secondly I wanted to race to keep the championship as close as possible although losing some points would be inevitable. And last but not least because a motocross rider never gives up – even in their worst moment because we know pain is a part of our sport and you know what they say - no pain no gain!

Luckily on Sunday morning it was raining heavily so I managed a good race even gaining some good points after a good start. Unfortunately, the second race was completely different. For me it was terrible – probably the worst race of my life!

I couldn't hang on to my handlebar with my left arm and I rode around with one hand for just three points. While it's not that many maybe at the end of the year those points could make all the difference. The pain was horrendous but at the end of the day it was nice to meet all those fans and to receive so many kind words. Respect is something that you can gain only on the field and during your toughest days!

After Maggiora we went to Teutschenthal where I was hoping for some rain – just to ride on a smoother surface – but the race was dry. I managed to do both races and after a tough first moto a little miracle happened in the second. I made a good start and the holeshot helped me to ride in front for some laps, eventually ending in sixth position, riding with

good speed and good pace, similar to the top guys.

There was a moment when I was second that I even thought 'maybe I can win' but it was too hard and the pain in my left arm soon put my feet back on the ground! It was tough, but sixth in these conditions was not bad at all.

I have to say that there was a person close to me in all those days that I have to thank so much and it's not my girlfriend Jill who is with me night and day in the good and the bad times. This person is Giuseppe Chiodi. He is a special person that works on my body in order to let me feel good. He was helping me in Maggiora and then he went to Belgium to prepare me for Teutschenthal – we were working night and day on the arm and sometimes it was really painful but without his help I don't know how I would have managed!

Now it's time to recover and think about the rest of the season: Sweden is coming and I want to be back at a decent level – that's for sure! The championship is still long though!

A presto amici (see you soon my friends)!

A large, handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Tony Cairoli". The signature is fluid and expressive, with varying line thicknesses and ink saturation.

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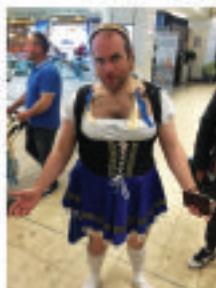
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BRYAN MACKENZIE

My month in pictures timeline ☺



Stay in fit one, clearly



turned the bawlers arse
inside out at Dux...oops



Mountainbike Mayhem 24hr race a day before Pintails British Masters. I done two laps for the team Saturday eve before going racing. We finished 4th on after the 24hrs.



I rode hard at Blashall for the Mayhem but luck would have the results show otherwise ↓



Find a barbers shop. The guy was great,
and I'm not gonna tell no fibs. Gud



Qualified 3rd behind Matt and
with that



got
in the
Vlog
of DT
pro shop open day



Pintails went well. I
stalled it like a racing
first moto but still won
the overall.



Cool night out with Rockstar



long drive got us home at 3am
from the last race of the month





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Please make no attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scenes, always wear protective clothing and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations!

Photo: R. Scheid

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IS THE EWC READY FOR A SHAKE UP OR SHOULD THINGS STAY AS THEY ARE?

Enough, it would seem, is enough. KTM – the biggest and most successful team in the Enduro World Championship paddock – aren't at all happy with the situation surrounding the 'international enduro scene'. More specifically the fact that competing in all types of enduro sport – EWC, Extreme and SuperEnduro – at the highest level, is logically and financially becoming too much.

In recent months there have been a tonne of rumours surrounding the 'future direction' of the EWC. And additional rumours recently floating around suggesting that different manufacturers want different things. KTM, together with Husqvarna, are the only manufacturers who seriously compete in the EWC, Extreme and SuperEnduro. And as such they see things their way. Pretty much all other European bike builders are focused solely on the EWC, and national championship competition, and therefore see things differently.

A lot of the talk at present seems to be focusing around the possible introduction of an Enduro GP class – a new category that will essentially determine the champion of champions of the EWC. A great idea many believe as one winner is a lot easier to get your head around, especially for the casual observer.

But what happens to the other classes once/if a new super class is established? Well, no one really knows as yet. But the worry is that the shadow it will cast over all other classes

will be so significant that they'll become all but insignificant. Some kind of trivial sideshow that no one really cares about, that's the fear.

KTM has a unique view on the international enduro scene. As the only player actively, no seriously, involved in EWC, Extreme and SuperEnduro, and based in east/central Europe, they, more so than other manufacturers can see how popular the Extreme scene has become. With less rules and more media in layman's terms it makes more sense to spend money there than the EWC.

KTM would like to see more variety in the EWC – events like Erzberg, Le Touquet etc being brought into the mix. Not an easy one to regulate but what they believe is a better way forward. Other manufacturers want to keep traditional enduro as it is. Finding and agreeing on a way forward would appear to be anything but simple.

What's best is a hard one to figure out. While we've long known that the Americans and the Australasians largely do things differently to the Europeans, is it simply the case that within Europe enduro sport has evolved to be more than one thing?

One thing to remember is that enduro isn't motocross, or like any of the 'professional' motorcycle disciplines a little further up the order. Yes, some riders are fortunate to earn their living racing bikes but the EWC is built upon hard working motor clubs. Private promoters don't organise EWC races for one

simple reason – there's no money to be made. It's passion and only passion that sees events run.

Everything related to the EWC is built on amateur/volunteer foundations. The more serious and 'professional' the teams, manufacturers and riders get the more hassle the championship becomes for the organisers.

As a championship, managing the ideas, wants, dreams and expectations of manufacturers, teams and riders is always challenging. You need look no further than series as varied as F1 and the British Motocross Championship to see that.

What the 'new EWC' will look like and whether it will please all involved is something only time will tell. But I've a feeling this is something that's going to roll on and on...

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DANIEL GROVE



DAN GOES OLD-SCHOOL RACING WITH THE VINTAGE BONANZA CREW . . .

There's a cracking little series gaining momentum down here in the south west that's serving up a day of what motocross must have been like back in the '80s (before my time) and the '90s which was when I got in to this game.

Now I can't say that I own an Evo (anything up to 1989), or Super Evo (anything up to 1999) however I can tell you that I own a bike suited to the sole modern bike class (bikes from 2000 to 2015) that is catered for in the Vintage Bonanza series and I was at Marshfield getting some races under my belt.

For regular readers you'll know that I race in the South West Premier series which is great however I'm finding this season that no matter how much fuel I burn through around the local practice tracks, no amount of laps ridden sets me up better for racing than actually racing.

So, after round three at maybe one of the best and most unknown tracks in the country – that's Garlands Moor near Holsworthy in Devon – I made a deal with myself to race more as the track got so rough and rutted that no practice track will ever get close to how a track cuts up on a race day. Shortly after was a round of the Vintage Bonanza series and as you can pay your entry through PayPal it worked out well as I'd just sold some tat on eBay so it was like I'd got a free entry.

I signed on the night before as the Mighty Marsh is on the doorstep and then took a stroll round the pits where there were some superb restoration projects to be seen. Now I didn't get in to motocross until 1993 when my Uncle David took an AMCA 250 senior race victory at the first meeting I attended that got me hooked – and I have been ever since – however I can still appreciate immaculate Maicos and 125 Hondas from the late '80s which seemed to be the weapon of choice in the Evo 125 race.

The format for race day was simple. Three laps of practice, then three races, and no transponders. Gate picks were first come first served which made sure that everyone was on the gate early and all 21 races were wrapped up by 4pm. I know that last month I made a big deal about transponders, however Evo races like this just don't need them due to the variety of bikes from different eras so riders need to go in separate races. If there were more than 40 riders on the gate then there was a second row, simple! Although picking a peg out of a hat would have been cool...

The meeting was like stepping back in time and that is the beauty of it – motocross how it used to be including the track that featured many off cambers and with some jumps removed it made for close racing in all races. Not to mention the track being proper hardpack with choppy bumps meant that you had to get pretty creative with line choice which I enjoyed as with ripped up tracks nowadays you normally get one inside line then a load of slop on the outside of it. The track was watered well the night before and stayed pretty moist in to the race programme thanks to the short practice sessions.

There has been a recent Facebook post for the series about introducing transponders for next year and I really hope they don't as to me that will take the edge of the uniqueness of the series. Not entirely but as it's ticking over quite nicely so why make any drastic changes? It was pretty cool seeing an actual lap scoring van, adding to the nostalgia of the event. Some series have come and gone quite quickly after putting too much money into unnecessary extras that you don't really need. All you need is a track and riders and transponders just add to the costs for everyone...

Chris Stone and his team that run this series

started the Vets MXDN that takes place at Farleigh and we all know how big that has become so they obviously know what they're doing and what the riders want so I've no doubt they do what's best for maintaining the series.

Each round pulls in around 250 riders which is a solid entry in our pro-practice-track-hero era that we're currently in so I think it's just a case of maintaining what they have. Talking of the Facebook page, there isn't an official website so all information and entry forms are posted on there and there's never any smack talk on there like you may have seen with other series, so it's definitely doing something right that's for sure.

Race day reminded me of my early days in the AMCA in 2002 and also back to when I grew up watching Moto-Vision videos in the '90s – thanks to all the Super Evos – where riders wore mismatching gear and turning up in a car and trailer was normal practice!

Some guys even had the original gear from the year of their bike so it was quite something to see a 250 two-stroke Honda with 1-800-Collect graphics and the rider wearing Sinisalo gear hanging out in the pits – that'll be a Jeremy McGrath fan for those born after 2000 as he did indeed wear Finnish motocross gear on his way to two AMA Supercross titles!

The next round of this series takes place at a perfect example of how tracks used to be and that's at Ford in Wiltshire. The track is right next to the A420 – you can't miss it – and that's on Sunday July 19. The track winds up and down a hillside in amongst plenty of trees with a few small jumps added which is just proper motocross. So if you own a two-stroke of any age, blow the dust off it and grab yourself an entry...

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JAKE

NICHOLLS



JAKE'S SECOND COMEBACK OF THE YEAR GOES MUCH BETTER THAN THE FIRST – PHEWSH...

When I wrote my column last month it was mid-afternoon and basically that evening was when I was due to have an x-ray to find out if I needed another operation and a two month recovery process for it to be healed or if it had healed itself sufficiently enough for me to start racing so that I could get on with my season...

Thankfully, it was the latter and I got the go ahead to start riding again. I was obviously really pleased with the news and the next day I was straight out onto the track. I felt really rusty to be honest because it had been five weeks since I raced at Canada Heights so that was to be expected.

For the first two days my wrist actually didn't feel much different to how it did before Canada Heights which was a bit concerning but I tried riding without my wrist brace and to my surprise it made it much less painful which I was pleased about.

I've been riding hard since then and gradually building myself up. Instead of just banging 40 minute motos in I've been going as fast as I can for as long as I can so I don't lose the speed that I still have. It's something Ben Townley and Jamie Dobb have always stuck by.

I've also been doing a fair bit of riding with EBB which has been good as he had been on the bike a couple weeks earlier than me but he's coming back from a serious leg injury so has been low on confidence. So by us pushing each other while riding it's helped raise our level a little bit. Obviously after so long out my speed isn't going to be at its best but by working hard on the bike in the last three weeks it's as good as it can be at the minute.

My off-track fitness is very good which it should be really considering I've been 'off track' since mid-February so I've kind of had to put that aside for the moment. I'm still keeping up my low level cardio off the bike but I haven't been 'smashing' intervals or weights as the on-track training has been taking its toll on my

body and it's hard to keep a eye on what's not enough, enough or too much.

But I'm lucky to have a fair bit of experience now and can listen to my body well. I'm also lucky to have some good people around me for reassurance as it's a difficult situation to be in when you're a bit behind, especially for myself as I pride myself on hard work and I enjoy it.

Two weeks after I got back on the bike I saw that there was a British Masters round at Pontrilas that weekend. I've raced there a couple times some years ago and didn't mind the track so I set about trying to get involved. Thankfully Lewis Tombs and his dad Howard said they would take me in their camper as poor Lewis is still out with his nasty foot injury and Ken Winstanley got me booked in at short notice.

We pulled up on Saturday night and it took me back to the days of schoolboy racing as there were campers and kids and BBQs everywhere. It was cool and quite a chilled atmosphere. The track was the same as when I rode it six years ago – pretty fast and not at all technical but good dirt. It was maybe a bit on the hard side but that was to be expected after the dry weather.

Practice was at half eight so was an early one. I qualified fourth which was okay although I had some crazy arm pump. The first race was a nightmare from a riding aspect. I got a good start but got pinched off slightly in the first bend and I was really slow on the first lap. I dropped back to sixth then started finding my way back through, struggled like mad with my bike set-up as the bike felt like a chopper. I had the worst arm pump again but managed to hold on for fourth.

In the second race I got a huge holeshot and got pushed back to third and kept that till the end. I was very uncomfortable but it was just what I needed – to be out of my comfort zone and battling hard.

I want to mention how well organised the day was. My first race was done by 11am and

the second race was finished by 2:30pm and so I was home by 7pm. It's not at all like the current Maxxis schedule eh? I didn't even get to the pub that's two miles up the road from Blaxhall until 7:30pm then half way through my Guinness I had to drive to the next town to meet the team's race truck as I neeedd the shock out of my race bike for practising the following week.

I got my bike handling way, way better through the week after Pontrilas. I drove straight to Holland early Tuesday morning and did three days in the sand – it was good to get on the rough stuff again. I spent a bit of Thursday morning setting my bike up with WP and got it working much better.

Although it wasn't right in the first race at Blaxhall, we changed a few things for the second race but went a bit too far so went a step back for the last race and It was handling very well. Thanks to Matt the chief mechanic for his input and listening/understanding my comments.

Blaxhall went well. The club did a great job, the track was different to normal due to the lack of rain around here but it was still good. I got better with each race, hit neutral on the start straight in the last race which wasn't ideal but rode well and came through to pass Ando on the last corner and I was only one point off the podium.

I also raced on Wednesday night. It was good fun and more importantly I got to get more race time in as there's nothing else like it.

Off to Sweden now for the GP. Thanks for reading...

Cheers #45



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NEWSHOUND

EXTRA! EXTRA!

READ ALL ABOUT IT...

If Steven Spielberg was to make a movie called MXGP: 2015 and script it on this year's drama-filled World Motocross Championship series it would likely go straight to DVD quicker than Chucky 5 because the story line is 'too far fetched'. It's been one thing after the other this season as the twists in the story line have been relentless...

Let's start with Febvre. We could be witnessing a changing of the guard in MXGP right now because he is on fire! In a little over a month that guy has fast tracked his way to the top of what's arguably the premier championship in the world. Within the space of four rounds he went from first time race winner (GB), to first career MXGP overall round winner (France), joined the BadAss club at Maggiora (Italy) a week later when he went arse over tit

down one of the big tabletop landings and rode his buckled Yammy to a sixth place finish and yet another overall victory and it didn't stop there. By the end of play in Teutschenthal he took the lead in the MXGP championship and signed a new two year factory Yamaha contract!

Now, that storyline is even more unbelievable than when Trip Carlyle trained his brother K.C. to win the World Supercross Championship in Supercross: The Movie!

At the other end of the spectrum Cairoli has struggled. Binning it in qualifying in spectacular fashion at his local round when he was expected to seriously ramp up his ninth title bid he did not pass 'GO' and collect 50 championship points but instead went straight to hospital. The verdict was a couple of

fractured bones in his hand, a dislocated elbow and a valiant effort on Sunday to keep his title aspirations intact. He cashed in even more points the following weekend when he lined up in Germany to scoop another impressive haul of points. If he wins the championship he won it over these two weekends.

So, just when TC222's championship looked like a ship wreck, championship leader (at that time anyway) Max Nagl had been strong, like bull. Nagl was at home and looking to capitalise further in the championship until he also had a nightmare in his back garden. It was another first lap qualifying crash in similar circumstances that claimed Cairoli and Max was taken out of the season in an instant with a broken tibia. Undergoing surgery on the very same day, the early season kingpin had been



Not a bad month for Max Anstie who wins a GP moto in Germany and takes over the lead in the Maxxis series



Steve Holcombe takes a fine win in the Welsh Two Day...

WELSH WONDER! HOLCOMBE TAKES WIN IN WALES...

Photo by Gemma James

wiped out of the series all together.

MX2 didn't miss the wrath either. The young maverick aka Jeffrey Herlings was quoted only days prior to Germany saying "only an injury will stop me" – jinx. Just 10 seconds into the first moto Herlings scrubbed Mt Teutschenthal so hard that he buried the front brake lever into the crest of the hill (I know, unbelievable yet totally believable) putting him into a nosedive that fractured his collarbone upon impact. Luckily though his points lead was as big as the Christmas turkey and even after trimming a little fat still stood at a healthy two whole GP margin of 100 points allowing KTM to take their finger off the panic button.

The FIM have taken note of the influx of rider injuries of late and are looking to implement a rule of full protective body armour in their series

as of next year making it mandatory for riders to wear front and back protection at all time on the bike.

To take a little of the edge off of the depressing storyline, Tim Gajser won his third GP of the year in Germany. En route to the feat, the super fast HRC man nipped Herlings to pole in timed practice before winning the qualifying race, race one and finishing second in race two of the weekend. What makes this even more impressive? Only on Thursday before Germany did Gajser finish school! He's only just turned into a full-time motocross rider in the last couple of weeks – MX2 lookout.

And Anstie too finally managed to pull it together to win a moto and scale the podium in Germany. It's the first time he's taken a step on the podium since last year but >>

Beta's Steve Holcombe is on a roll this year. Firing on all cylinders, the up and coming youngster is taking the world by storm in 2015. Fresh off another win in the Enduro Junior World Championship, Holcombe bagged himself the overall win at the Welsh Two Day Enduro. Britain's biggest enduro, the Beta rider comfortably won the opening day. Despite a few mistakes on day two, he still had enough in hand to secure him the winner's trophy for the first time.

Husqvarna's Joe Wootton – another rider on the up – placed a strong second overall having won day two outright. Working his way back up to speed following his early season injury, KTM mounted Jamie Lewis completed the top three.

has come so close to tasting the bubbly on a few occasions this year already but the trend of one good moto backed up by one mediocre moto has always seen him come short. Teutschenthal nearly wasn't much different as 6-1 isn't far away from his up and down results of weeks passed but the fact the second number in the equation was in fact a 1 was enough to propel him onto the second step for the first time this year.

Back in Britain, the date issue that surrounded what was originally round seven of the Maxxis British Championship has been mulled over and amended. When it was decided that the Brazilian GP would be replaced by a third Italian GP it was moved to the following weekend which meant that it landed right on the same weekend as the Maxxis British Championship round at FatCat. After a reshuffle of the deck it's now been decided that Fatcat will now be the final round of the series on the reserve date of October 4.

After missing the opening round of the domestic championship, Maximus Anstie has kicked all of our MX2 asses in each race of the

Maxxis British championship since and has now taken control of the red plate of the series. He took it from French Import, Steven Lenoir, who has led the most part of the series but yet to record a race win, however, has finished just behind Max more times than anyone else.

Jake Nicholls finally made his 'real' return to racing since his wrist shattering crash at a pre-season international. Having made a couple of premature comebacks before under the misguidance of a doctor – after finding in fact the bone was still not fully healed – he impressed at Blaxhall. Jake narrowly missed out on the podium by a single point.

EBB made a comeback too which is his first race since an Arenacross collision obliterated his leg in January and his first on a Suzuki for the Geartec team. Elliot was steady away with two races inside the top 10 and a no pointer after damaging his front brake. Expect him to get faster from here until the end of the season.

Simmo put on a clinic in the last moto at Blaxhall. Crashing over the bars on the first lap, SS24 came from dead last to win the moto in what people are calling the most exciting race

of the year so far. It should make for some great TV so be sure to catch the Greenlight coverage on Sky this month.

Two-thirds of the GB MXoN team have been cemented already – Simmo MX1, Max MX2. That leaves the MX3 berth still wide open but with Searle, Wilson and Nicholls all coming back from injury it'll be a few weeks away from being finalised.

The month of June brought us very close to overdosing on enduro action. In particular the first weekend of the month was maniac with X Games, Erzberg and the Enduro World Championship all happening within the space of 48 hours we needed a couple of days off to recover from that mash up.

Of course Erzberg grabbed the majority of the limelight. It's a crazy, anything goes kinda race and this year was no exception. We'll not dive too deep into the analysis of it – dig a little deeper into the magazine and you'll find everything you need to know about it – but let's just say it's one that will certainly go down in history.

Four winners was definitely a world first



Herlings gets ready to taste German soil

for any race. A lot was talked about the sportsmanship those five riders Jonny Walker, Graham Jarvis, Andreas Lettenbichler, Alfredo Gomez and Wade Young displayed during the notorious Downtown section.

Teaming up together and refusing to be beaten was cool to see – lesser men would have quit – but if there's any competitive blood in your body then it wasn't the result we wanted to see. And we're pretty confident it was the result the riders wanted either.

Lets just hope that next year organisers will ensure that 100 per cent of the course is raceable and not just 75 per cent because when the best riders in the world can't complete the planned route solo it becomes more of an obstacle course than a race track.

With Erzberg 2015 put to bed, extreme enduro now moves on to Romania and the infamous Red Bull Romaniacs. Last year was a right belter of a race with Walker taking on and beating Jarvis at a race that Jarvis had long made his own. Hungry to win one by himself in 2015, Grimbo will be out for vengeance in Romania and judging by his pace, fitness and form in Erzberg he's certainly capable of

winning his Romaniacs crown back.

In EWC waters things are also ramping up as the series builds towards the final two rounds of the year in Belgium and France. Where British interest is concerned there's plenty to get excited about. Jamie McCanney is comfortably in front in the Enduro Junior standings. The Husqvarna rider has been on song all season and is edging closer to that world crown.

But he's got company in the form of Steve Holcombe. One of the revelations of this year's championship, Holcombe is already up to third overall in the point's race despite missing the season opener in Chile.

In the Enduro 1 class Danny McCanney is now firmly settled in. More podium results have come the Manxman's way and he's currently sitting third in the standings. For his first season in the senior ranks that's a solid effort indeed.

Meanwhile across the water in the GNCC series, Brit ex-pat Jason Thomas is hanging onto his lead in the XC2 class. Running away with things at the gnarly Snowshoe classic, Thomas picked up another win this season to extend his lead in the series to a handsome 64 points.



WALKER RE-SIGNS! JONNY TO STAY ORANGE UNTIL 2017

Good news followed Jonny Walker's joint win at the ErzbergRodeo when he later signed a contract to see him with KTM until at least 2017.

With victories in this year's Hell's Gate, The Tough One and also Erzberg it was sort of a given that the Walker and KTM bond wouldn't be broken anytime soon.

But there's nothing quite like the satisfaction of inking that deal and now Walker can focus on his racing knowing he's good to go for the next two years at the very least.

SWM RETURN THE ICONIC ITALIAN BRAND ARE BACK!

SWM motorcycles are back in business. The iconic motorcycling brand of the sixties through eighties has returned to production with bikes expected to roll off the assembly line in the coming weeks. Restarted with investment from a Chinese backer, SWM are planning bikes in the enduro, supermoto, dualsport and café racer market.

Essentially rebadging the old Husqvarnas they will have the RS300R and RS650R enduro models on sale shortly. So if you've been a long time fan of SWM or still fancy Husky's old 300 four-stroke they have may have something to suit your tastes.



Sherco's Lorenzo Santolini picked up a maiden EWC win in Italy



The SWM brand is back!





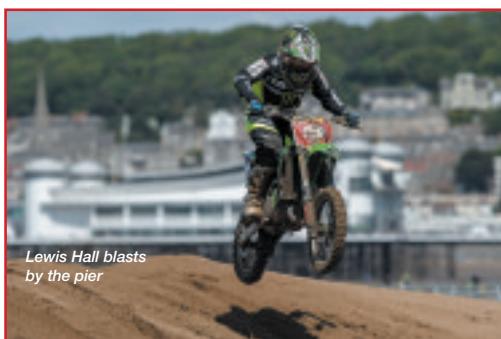
GREAT WESTON!

THE PRO NATIONALS MX FESTIVAL PERKS UP AN OTHERWISE DULL WEEKEND IN WESTON-SUPER-MARE...

Photos by Nuno Laranjeira



MC Jeff Perrett kept fans entertained all weekend long



Lewis Hall blasts by the pier



Luke Hawkins and Dan Thornhill lead the Pro Nationals pack around turn one



These guys are bananas for bananas, apparently



"Oh I do like to be beside the seaside, oh I do like to be by the sea..."



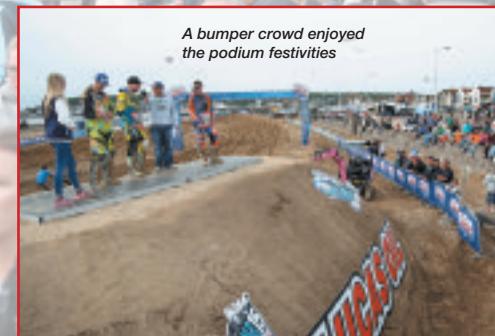
Harri Kallas picks a rut



There was plenty of action off the track too...



Tenacious B revelled in the tough conditions



A bumper crowd enjoyed the podium festivities



MX2 winner Steven Lenoir



Tanel Leok was unstoppable in the soft sand racking up four wins



A young fan checks out this Gert Krestinov replica

With two tracks and more than 50 races, 400 riders and 10,000 spectators the Pro Nationals MX Festival really hit the spot with fans of mathematics – and motocross too. Livening up the sleepy seaside town for the third year in a row the two-day event that was backed by Lucas Oils rocked hard with two full days of racing and a Saturday night party with live bands, fireworks and head-to-head racing in the Whoop Loop! Woop woop!

Out on the track it was LPE Kawasaki's Tanel Leok who revelled in the deep sandy conditions winning all four Pro class motos with relative ease in a race programme that was half MX Nationals

and half Pro Nationals Festival. Written down it seems more confusing than the actual reality of it all and the upside of it was that it basically meant there was never a dull moment on or off the track which kept the massive crowd on their toes.

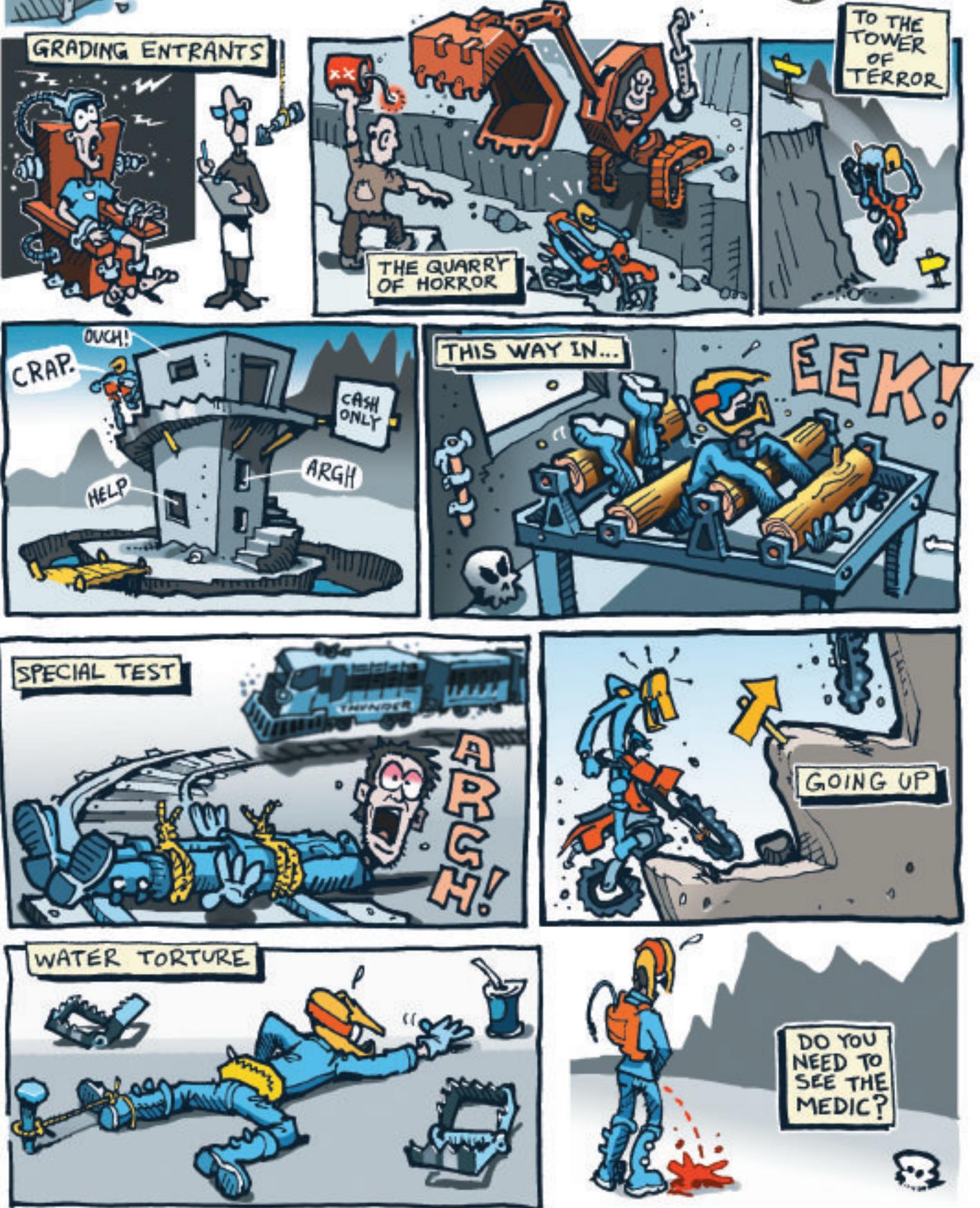
With FMX, BMX, MTB and street bike demos going off throughout the day along with all the Kidzone goodness there was never a dull moment during the day and with raucous rock bands and top DJs providing aural entertainment in the evenings the whole weekend was awesome!

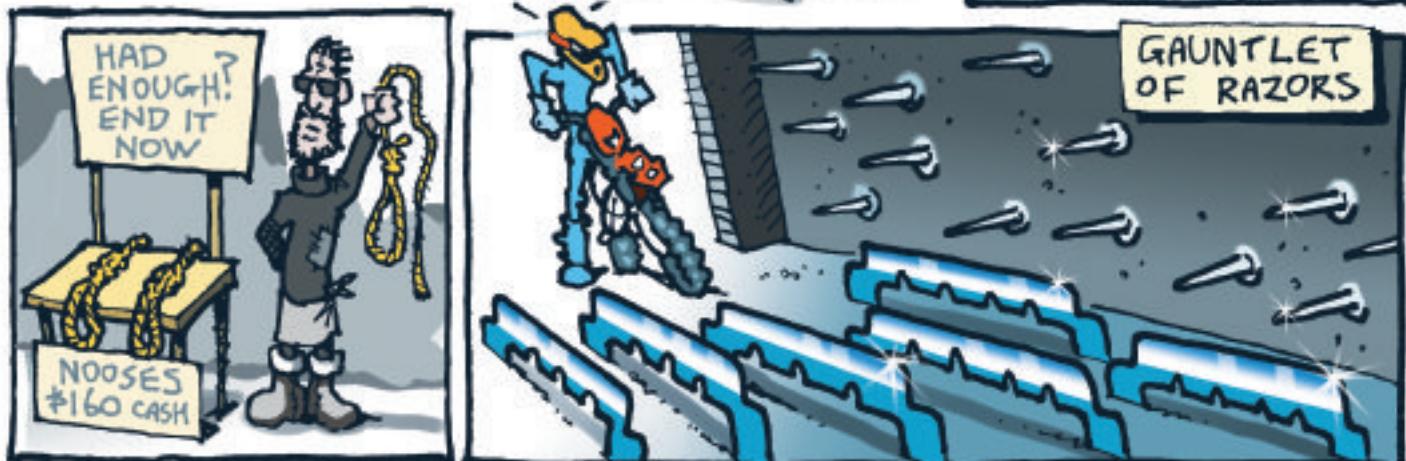
They say a picture paints a thousand words so without further delay let's get stuck in to some of Nuno Laranjeira's awesome snaps from Weston-super-Mare.



If you look closely you'll see our Gavin in the background

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Double Supercross

Romain Febvre is the hottest and most unexpected prospect that MXGP has thrown up in recent years. His ascent to the top of the standings has been shocking, magnificent and revitalising and made us want the inside line on how the 23 year old has slayed the premier class. We also asked a few of the people around him for some perspective . . .

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer



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Romain's maiden MXGP class win came at Villars sous Ecot in front of his home fans



Even Romain Febvre knows that hardly anyone – not even the most hardened and experienced motocross Grand Prix expert – would have predicted his rise and impact in 2015. By the time this issue hits the shelves, the Frenchman could have won the Swedish GP and that victory would bring him to four and equal the haul by the most successful rookie in the premier class this century – a certain Sicilian who blazed through the championship (also on a blue Yamaha) back in 2009.

From a broken arm and relative obscurity in the winter to standing on a MotoGP grid at Assen in late June with Valentino Rossi as the two series' leaders posed for pictures is a juxtaposition of immense proportions. A brief check of Romain's profile would indicate that he likes to do things in a hurry.

Partially renowned for his dip into supermoto – that he loathes talking about now – Febvre came back to motocross and burned a path to the top – EMX250 European Champion in 2011, MX2 learning year to 13th in the series in '12, first GP podium at the first race of '13 and then maiden victory in Brazil last year with Husqvarna until he fell foul of the 23 age rule on the 250s.

Frustratingly for Febvre his birthday on December 31 meant that he missed a genuine tilt at the 2015 MX2 title by a matter of hours. Yamaha, MXGP and stardom beckoned.

"I saw him as a someone that did everything by himself," offers Yamaha Factory Racing Yamalube Team Principal Michele Rinaldi. "He didn't have his family with him so much but he

had some friends. He didn't have everything like some kids have from the beginning. I thought he had a lot of potential to show, especially because he stopped motocross for a couple of years. Last year when I spoke with him in July and we had to decide with Yamaha which rider to go for I felt he had a lot of potential and he is now showing more than I thought at this stage so the decision to go with him was great.

"I have watched him for the last three years and he moved to Belgium to learn the sand," the Italian goes on. "He was 'growing' fast. He improved a lot last year and then had to move to MXGP for 2015 and I thought it would be another learning year. I was expecting it to be up-and-down, some good results and maybe a podium. I did not expect this consistency."

"I guess he is coming at motocross from a different path," says agent Gerard Valat, the Frenchman who helped Febvre broker the deal to ride the YZ450FM. "I would also say that he doesn't have bad habits because he is pretty fresh and new. I think he can evaluate every option. He is open-minded. He is a really cool kid in everyday life and is a happy and nice person. Always funny and well-educated. He is like fresh air."

There is something different about Febvre. He is very much his own guy. He doesn't have an entourage, can smile easily and carries an intensity that he keeps in his own (admittedly quite public) space in the Yamaha awning where he preps goggles, gets changed and digests his latest set of laps on the 461 machine.

His rate of accomplishment has leapt up on everybody in 2015 and you get the feeling

that he is just starting to get used to the extra demands on his time (he never complains and to my knowledge fulfills every request). He is stopped more in the paddock and still carries a shy little edge when it comes to the attention and growing adoration (it was an eye-opener to see just how much the public cheered and supported him at Villars sous Ecot when he ran to home GP glory with the same level of reverence usually enjoyed by countryman Gautier Paulin). With girlfriend Megan permanently in tow, Romain is part of the furniture of the Grand Prix paddock... the only difference is that now he's almost the centrepiece of the room...

We speak – Romain with his good but heavily accented English – at the Grand Prix of Italy. He'd wear Yamaha's yellow to dramatic effect in the rain on Sunday for win number two and then wait a week to complete his hat-trick in Germany and seize the red-plate from the luckless Max Nagl. There had already been comments that Febvre's all-out approach to MXGP and the fact that he has been too-fast-too-soon would lead to a fall sooner or later but at this stage it remains to be seen and he is still shooting upwards...and forwards.

DBR: Okay, what was better – MXGP victory at home in France or your very first GP win in Brazil last year?

RF: "France, for sure. To win your first GP – in MXGP – and in front of your home crowd was amazing. For sure it was my best moment ever. Brazil was really good last year but I think the crowd [in Villars] changed things. I can >>

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Ken Roczen chooses the PODIUM CFT handlebar in the CHAMP bend to keep control during the 2015 season.



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remember how difficult it was to get to the press conference right after the race because of the public. I think it was a long time before I could finally get changed but after winning a GP like that then for sure you want to be with the fans."

DBR: Do you think the team were surprised that the first win had come by round eight?

RF: "Yeah! And not only the team...! I think after the British GP they knew I could win some motos and a GP victory would be close. They could see my progression and how every race I had been getting better. Maybe they were not expecting that result so early...me also. It was strange for me in France. I was a bit over-excited going to that race and because results had been going well I thought it might be a stressful weekend...but it wasn't at all. I didn't get pressurised more than any other race and I was really pleased with that. I hope things will stay that way."

DBR: You had the European Championship in 2011, a GP learning year in '12, a first podium in 2013 and then the MX2 win in 2014. Now the MXGP podium in Spain, first win and more...It has all come so fast. Some riders spend years trying to win a Grand Prix...

RF: "Yeah sure! It has come really fast. I think my progression has been good and I think I still have some way to go. I think I learn things quickly such as riding a different bike and not making the same mistakes. I try to learn as fast as I can and I think it is working. For sure the team help me a lot with their experience. When you are riding without stress and you are not thinking of other factors on the bike then it is easier. You can focus more."

DBR: What did Michele say to you after France?

RF: "He was really happy...for the team, Yamaha and everybody. He had Jeremy doing well last year and winning in Loket so I'm sure he was expecting to win again this season but maybe not with me."

Michele: "I like that he only counts on himself. He doesn't need the help, support and opinions >>





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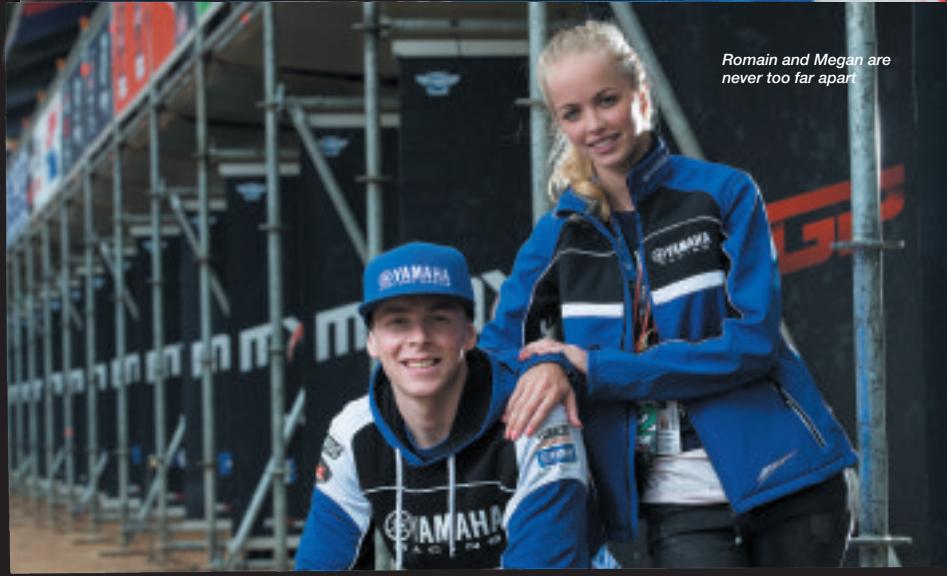
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Romain and Megan are never too far apart

The Girlfriend

Megan Closet

DBR: How did you guys meet?

MC: "I came to a GP with some friends and he saw me and we had a mutual friend. He added me on Facebook and so we started talking on Facebook and saw each other at the races. In Lierop a few years ago we kissed for the first time and that was our moment. At the time he was still on the German team and things moved very quickly. When I finished studying then we moved in together in Belgium. He is 23 and I'm 21."

DBR: How is he frustrating?

MC: "He can never sit still. He cannot take a day off. If he's not cycling or running then it is always something like being in the garden cleaning. He can never sit on the couch and watch TV or a movie. It is unbelievable. I love to sit on the couch and watch a movie! We don't really chill out. Sometimes we go shopping but we don't sit still or do nothing. It is always sport, motocross and now we have a new dog. He also doesn't like holidays! But this year I will beg him to go!"

DBR: Do you suffer or enjoy watching him?

MC: "Good question. I would say both. It is very stressful and even more when he is at the front. You don't want him to crash or make a mistake. The GP in France was amazing to see him winning."

of others. He likes to listen to people but is very focussed on his target – quite a lot for a rider of his age, more so than many others I think. I believe that is one of his biggest advantages."

DBR: How are you learning to be a star? People have talked about Cairoli, Desalle, Paulin, Herlings, Ferrandis, Nagl in the last few years but now your name is right there with them...

RF: "I haven't learnt so much yet! I haven't come through like Paulin or perhaps another one of those riders. I really don't care if people like Paulin or Ferrandis is more famous than me in France. I like to have good people around me and not just because I have won GPs or have become a 'star'. I thought I might have some supporters in France for the GP but it was really amazing that weekend. Villars is quite close to my house and it was great that so many people came and cheered for me. I knew a lot of them as well, people who have followed the racing for many years. I hope I can stay humble. I know the attention and the show will get bigger."

Megan: "I was scared that there could be a change and I didn't want that to happen but Romain is not really that type of character. He has stayed the same guy and lives in a small apartment. He is not about the 'show'."

DBR: One of the consequences of results is more media, bigger deals, contracts; that must be the nice side...

RF: "Yes and it's the same for every rider. When you are going well then everybody is behind you. I was looking around a lot last year when some things were not going so well. I knew I had to move to MXGP and only Yamaha were there to offer me a good change because they believed in me and my riding. They were the only factory team. You could say they took a risk but the situation has come good. The improvement with contracts and other deals for sure comes along with success but I am looking ahead."

Gerard: "He has some very precise ideas on what he wants. He doesn't compare himself to other riders and has no interest in what other guys are making. He is clear on what he needs in terms of contracts but also the bike and the settings. He tries to understand how the whole thing works and to take advantage of it."

DBR: Do you really think you were a risk for Yamaha?

RF: "I don't know...it is difficult to say."

DBR: We spoke in Loket last year when you said you might have to head to America to stay on a 250 and it was an uncertain time for you. Now when you think it of the emotion of France and the other GP wins this season then it must feel like a long journey from that moment...

RF: "Sure, sure. It was difficult to find a good team in MXGP until Yamaha came along. I think I showed some good things last year. For sure I made many mistakes but I showed the speed. I felt there were some positive signs and I was looking for a factory team because when you need to change class and bike then the team is so important. I knew if I wasn't 'factory' then it would be very difficult."

"I was also looking at the USA because they don't have an age limit and I could have some more time on the 250. I came into GP late compared to the other guys and only had three years in MX2 so the experience was not there. If it had been possible to stay one or two seasons more in MX2 then I would have done that."

"The U.S. deal finally didn't work out and I jumped on the Yamaha offer because I knew the team was good. I knew they had a problem with the bike a couple of years before but Jeremy [van Horebeek] looked great in 2014 and had some great results and some wins." >>



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DBR: At the Yamaha presentation in Italy at the beginning of the season you were regarded as the #2. The team didn't treat you like that but it was clear that Van Horebeek was the one going for the title while you were going to learn in your first year. How did you feel about that dynamic because you came in and pretty much outperformed Van Horebeek from the first GP...

RF: "Maybe Michele or someone on the team was thinking like this – Jeremy for the championship and a learning year for me – but I did not feel like this. Both riders have the same things and have the bike exactly how they want. The team give 100 per cent for both so that the result is made only on the track. That's really good."

"It was not that Jeremy had any priority with the bike because he was second last year. Both of us chose what we wanted for our bikes. I never felt that there was any difference at all between me and Jeremy. I think Jeremy put too much pressure on himself at the beginning of the season. Maybe I will have that next year... but I don't think so because I don't look at any other riders and every year I make sure I take something away from each season and learn as much as I can."

Gerard: "Like everybody I am surprised by what Romain has done...but I knew he would do well because he is strong mentally – this is one of his biggest assets. He is not afraid of anybody and has the attitude that everybody is the same, so if one person can go fast then he should be able to as well. He is not intimidated by other riders even if they are a one or 10 times world champion – it doesn't make any difference to him."

Michele: "So far he hasn't felt the pressure and this is unbelievable. Not at the French GP, not in Italy...Compared to anybody else I had in the team for 30 years he seems to feel the pressure less and this is a big advantage for a rider – so far..."

DBR: You are a friendly and easy guy all the time but I've also seen you quite pissed off and pretty angry...do you have a dark side to your character?

RF: "Ha! I guess when I am not happy then it is more at myself because I haven't been able to ride like I want. Also making a mistake that I have made before pisses me off. I don't have a dark side! Although I can be angry and when that comes out then you'll know I'm not happy with myself."

Megan: "It doesn't happen much but when he doesn't ride like he can...also when he crashes the only question I ask when he comes back is 'are you hurt?'. Most of the time the answer is 'no' and then I leave him for 10 or 15 minutes! After that then it's good. He doesn't like all the questions and I learnt that from the beginning! He always wants to be better and is working hard for this. When he knows he can be better then he never gives up. That's why when things are not going good then he gets angry because he knows he can be at the front."

DBR: I remember writing about you in 2013 because you were riding that Wilvo Nestaan KTM with such style, nice scrubs and a really fluid approach. You seemed to have really made a step that year in Grand Prix. Is that same guy still there or have you had to change a bit and become more conservative for the 450?

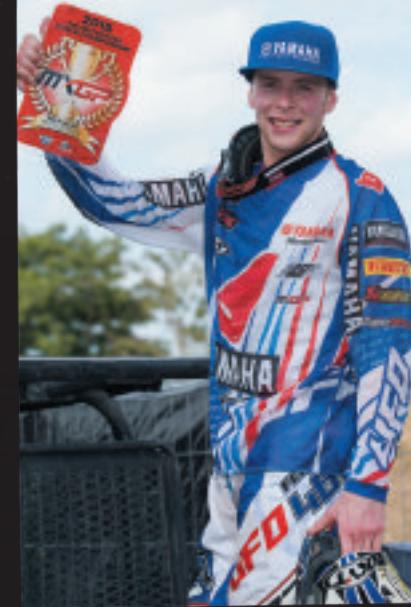
RF: "A little bit but I try to do everything like before. I like to scrub and have a nice style on the bike. I try to be as technical as I can. I don't think I have changed that much but on the 450 you need to be calm because it is easy to make a mistake. You cannot be crazy and have to always be focused."

"Sometimes on the 250 you can go more than 100 per cent because you can still catch control but this is not the case on the 450. I learnt the limit of the 450 quickly this winter and I was talking with Michele about this. I thought it would take some time to get used to it and not go over the limit but it happened quickly and I think this made the difference over the other riders who moved to MXGP [this year]."

DBR: You mention having good people around you. It seemed the case especially when you were at Jacky Martens' team in MX2 in '13 and '14...

RF: "Yes, Jacky had some good people around the team who are still there. It is really nice to have that and some of them were riding before and knew how to help us and what we needed to improve. It is nice for the riders and the team and they have the passion. They want to push 100 per cent also to see the best of the rider.

"This year it is not the same [for him] because Jacky had the sponsors quite involved in the team and here it is just team and they are really close. They really are like a family. They are used to working with each other and have been together for many years. It is a different environment but I like it. Jacky also helped >>



The Boss

Michele Rinaldi

DBR: How can you explain this trend for riders coming in and doing well in first year in Yamaha – Philippaerts, Frossard, Van Horebeek and now Romain...

MR: "I think for the riders coming from another class then it is usually a bit easier to race and compete because they come with less pressure than other riders already here. They are rookies so they have to prove to be good. The second season is the most difficult, like we are seeing with Jeremy this year. He proved to be very fast and consistent with us in 2014 but now it has been hard for him to reconfirm."

"Jeremy had a so-so year in 2013 but stepped up last year and Romain is doing the same. MX2 was okay with some highlights but he has moved up a level this season. The same also with David [Philippaerts] who was good in 2007 but then came in with us and won the championship."

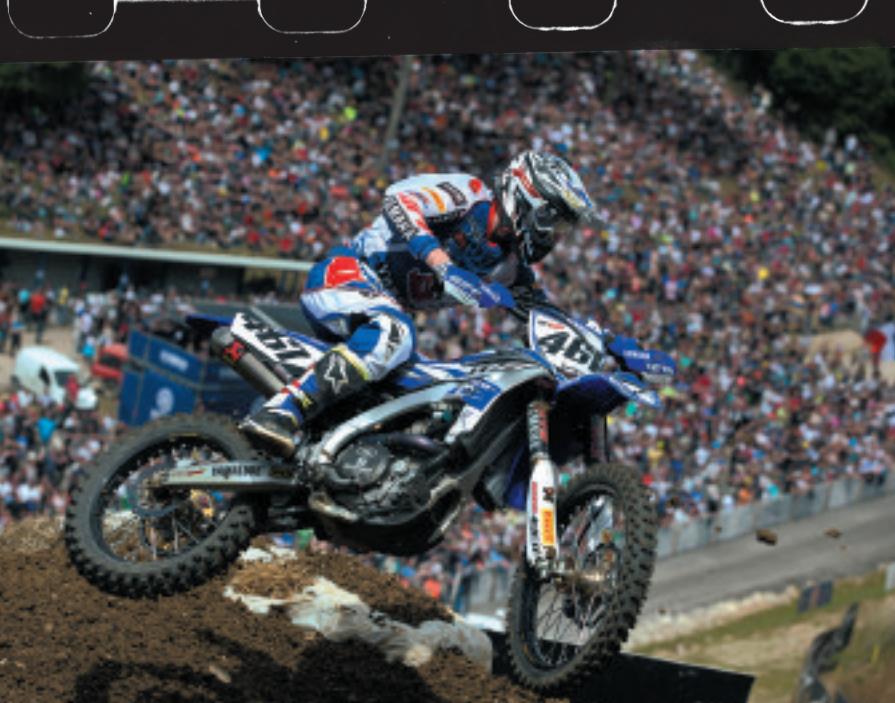
"Why does this happen with us? We could maybe talk a long time about the reasons but I think one of the main things is the feeling these riders have with the people here and the support we give. With the motorcycle we don't ask the rider to adapt to the bike, especially with the 450 which is quite difficult, but try to turn the bike around the rider. We put them at the centre of the project. Sometimes it doesn't work but there are big possibilities when it comes off, like we saw last year with Jeremy and now with Romain."

DBR: You also have a solid core to the team...

MR: "I know riders can change based on a manufacturer's decision, salary or whatever but for me the solid base of a team should always be the same and maybe even grow. I always do my best to keep the guys and always make them happy to continue to work together. This is very important for me."

DBR: Romain is another French rider for you after Paulin and Charlier...

MR: "For sure France is still a reference because the country is a little bit different towards the sport. If you go a race there then you see the crowd and it is different to any other country, even including the UK. They are really motivated to support. This kind of attitude to the sport brings through more talent. They are the only country that can have two or three teams at the Nations."





Romain's ride through the pack after crashing hard at Maggiora was nothing short of stunning

me a lot. When I signed the contract for his team I was living between France and Germany and my old team and I knew I needed to be in Belgium. He helped me so much to get the apartment and to find a life there because I was by myself. I was 19/20 and it was not easy but I had a good feeling with the people and if I had a problem then they helped me a lot.

DBR: Do you still live there?

RF: "I changed the place but I'm still mainly in Belgium, around eight kilometres from where I was before. Belgium is still useful for the riding, training because there are more tracks and they are open all week. The team have a base there and my training mechanic is Belgian. I like living there! I tell this to many people but they don't believe me! The people are really friendly and I don't have a problem with the language because they speak English or French."

DBR: Tell me about team-mates because you had Jake [Nicholls] then Alex Tonkov...

RF: "[Febvre smiles and makes an 'endo' gesture with his hand] You know about that, everybody does!"

DBR: Are you a guy who can carry a team by himself? Or do you like having someone you can work with and bounce ideas off? Are you a good team-mate?

RF: "I don't really mind but when it's friendly then for sure it is always better. Jake was the best team-mate I've had. He is a really good guy and we were always in the same category until he changed and during that time we'd have some battles on the track but they were always clean and really good fun. 2013 was a good year. 2014 was...difficult...with Tonkov."

DBR: Why?

RF: "I didn't know him before he came into the team, only from what I'd seen on the track and from that everybody knew him. I thought 'okay, we'll see what happens...'. Things started pretty good and we had some fights on the track that were not really clean and it all began from there. He didn't have any respect for

anybody, not the manager or people in the team and I really didn't like that.

"There was one moment when I thought 'okay, it's finished with me and him' and I just went to the team every time to do my job and didn't care what he did. It was pretty difficult and I know for the mechanics as well it was hard [with Tonkov]. I don't really know what the situation is now there but I hope for the team it is better. It was another reason why I was happy to join Yamaha. I knew Jeremy a little bit and the relationship was normal and has continued like that..."

DBR: But you have come into 'his' team and pretty much unseated him...

RF: "Maybe, but I don't feel it is like this. [Thinks] Maybe, yes...but the relationship is the same as it was at the beginning of the season. I don't want to live with him or am bothered about eating or hanging out with him but I like to be nice and to say hello when we're together."

DBR: The team are tight with the same core together for a long time – Mino, Fabio, Giovanni, Manu, Cippa – and you seem to be with them a lot. You are based in the awning and you eat with the guys...

RF: "From my side during the race weekend I don't like to be by myself and enjoy being with the team and everybody whether I am doing bad or good. I think it is important to be with the team and it is not a big deal for me. I get changed here and speak with everybody. I cannot say I like being alone in my camper. Every rider is different, some like to be quiet..."

DBR: Okay – brace yourself – but some people will want to know...do you still like Supermoto?

RF: "[Smiling] Arghh..."

DBR: Or are you sick of people saying 'supermoto guy...'?

RF: "Not sick of it but everybody asks, and the popular question is 'if supermoto has helped me?' and the truth is that it is totally different.

Maybe it did help a little bit with my feeling but I think I lost more [for motocross] than what I gained by doing it. Riding supermoto I normally just do one race in Belgium because normally it is a bit boring for me."

DBR: BMX still?

RF: "In the winter but not so much during the season because it can be risky. I'd like to...but you can hurt yourself very quickly."

DBR: Megan is always with you. You seem like a solid double act...?

RF: "[Smiles] Yeah, she's a good one! We've been together nearly three years. My father and mother cannot come to many races because they work and my father likes me to get on with the job by myself because he knows I will learn, also the business side because I do everything by myself. I know he doesn't want to be behind me all the time and I have gained a lot of things by that.

"I have a great relationship with Megan and she shares all the bad and good moments. We had to learn about each other in the first year because she hadn't been to a GP before but now she comes all the time and she helps a lot. The first year was difficult because of the changes of the lifestyle and we argued a lot! Now you could say we have the right setting!"

DBR: Lastly you had to change from KTM to Husqvarna in 2013, then from Husqvarna to MXGP last year. Now you'll be with Yamaha for the next two years. How do you feel about that stability?

RF: "Now I know what I have and when you change you can never be completely sure. I really like what I have here at Yamaha. I think the bike can still improve and we have made it better during the season. The team are really great, so I don't know why I need to move. Life is really good at the moment. The best thing is to spend every day doing what you love. It is not always easy but it is nice."



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THE SOUTH AFRICAN SPEEDSTER
TALKS ABOUT HIS CAREER, THE
DECISION TO QUIT PRO RACING
AND WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT...

Words by Max Hind Photos by Nuno Laranjeira and Harry Lessman



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For over a decade Neville Bradshaw has been a regular on the British motocross championship scene, dedicating his life to chasing the biggest prize in UK MX. He's raced with passion, heart and a hunger for success and his incredible work ethic has made him a fan favourite.

The South African has also won a hat-trick of Red Bull Pro Nationals MX2 titles, lifted the British SX crown and taken a British Masters title. His story is one of determination and a steely desire to prove the doubters wrong.

In 2015 Bradshaw decided to go it alone and race with his own set-up. He was gunning for his first Maxxis moto win – he's won an overall but not an individual moto – in his last season of racing before hanging up his boots for good. However, after just three rounds of the Maxxis, one change of manufacturer and one wrecked bike Bradshaw's dream was broken.

"Towards the end of last year Dave and Vicki [of DB Racing] decided to pack it up. I believed that they were one of the best teams in the British championship paddock and I couldn't really see myself going anywhere else from there," says Nev. "So I figured the next best option for me would be to just do it on my own. I managed to put something cool together [with Husqvarna], worked really hard at it and busted my balls off in the winter trying to get everything sorted.

"Everything seemed to be in line but unfortunately I never really got a good feel with the Husqvarna. As good as it is out of the box – I was sitting sixth in the British championship after round two on a stock bike – I just didn't feel comfortable on it.

"The chassis was just unreal for me. The bike never did what I wanted it do – I always seemed to be a foot away from where I wanted to be – and I spent so much of my own money changing stuff and trying to get it right. I'd be really frustrated on a weekend, I'd be riding round at 70 per cent but still getting decent results. Every week I was changing clamps, changing forks, changing shocks. I just couldn't get comfortable on the thing.

"Engine wise it was unbelievable. I'd go as far as to say that it was quicker than my race bike from last year as a stock standard engine. But I just didn't gel with the chassis and didn't want to spend my last year feeling sketched out all the time and not enjoying what I was doing."

Once you lose confidence in a bike it's a hard thing to regain and harder still to get your head over that physiological hump and start riding at 100 per cent again.

"In the MX2 class especially you have to be feeling good. I think my last race on the Husqvarna I went 2-2 at the MX Nationals but last year I was racing with [Steven] Lenoir every moto – this year he was 30 seconds up the track from me. I just couldn't find a good feel and I couldn't push. I'm not there just to make up the numbers – either I'm going to go all-in and do well or else I'm just not going to do it at all."

Nev's solution was simple – change machinery...

"I looked at all the bike tests and after the KTM and Husqvarna the Yamaha had the next best horsepower. I've always liked the look >>



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of the Yamaha so I gave it a ride. Honestly man, I just loved it! From the first day on the bike I gelled with it and I felt like myself again. That was a big thing for me. I started doubting myself after those bad races I was having. A few old sponsors came along and helped me out with some parts for it. We put a pipe and an ignition on it and I went to the British championships [at Canada Heights] just wanting to race and give 100 per cent.

"Obviously, I knew that my bike was nothing compared to the bikes I would be racing – a standard bike with a pipe and ignition just doesn't cut it at that level. But I knew that I could make the time up through my corner speed and just enjoying being on the bike. So the first race I came from like 22nd to ninth and I was catching up to the group in front of me. I knew my speed was good and I knew that as the day wore on and the track got slower and rougher I was going to get better."

"In race two I started around 14th and, man, I just hustled on that first lap, it was awesome!"

I had such a good feeling on the bike. I came through to seventh, got into sixth and I could see [Harri] Kullas and [Petar] Petrov the whole moto. I could see Lenoir across the track staying the same distance away.

"Eventually I caught [Lewis] Trickett for fifth but three laps before the end I heard something go in the bike and as the two-lap board came out the bike let go. Right then and there all the effort, all the money, it was wasted. Right there and then I said to myself 'that's it, I've had enough'. I was heartbroken."

It was a bitter pill for Nev to swallow – especially as pre-season he'd set his sights on one last career goal before calling it a day.

"There was one thing I was chasing this year – I'll put my cards on the table, I didn't want to end my career without winning a British championship moto. I've won an overall, I've had lots of seconds and lots of thirds but a moto win is the one thing that I've been chasing.

"But now I've realised that with people like

Max Anstie in the class on a good day on a standard 250F I'm going to finish third or fourth. I'm never going to beat Max on a standard bike. So why should I bankrupt myself just chasing that one thing?

"The biggest shame of it all and the thing that is really bugging me is the amount of work and training that I put in for this year, the amount of money that I spent and the fact that I felt I was riding so well. I feel that my fitness is great. I had everything in line to have a solid year. But as always the finances came into it and I just can't do it."

Nev's age obviously plays a part and although his hunger is still undiminished at 31 he finds himself with responsibilities he didn't have a decade ago – grown-up factors such as a young family to provide for.

"If I was 19 years old again I would give up everything, just like I did before. I put every single thing I had into motocross and had an amazing career, better than I could ever have imagined. Over the last year-and-a-half I've >>

Overseas adventure

Nev's journey from SA to the UK . . .

When Nev had run out of challenges in his native South Africa he took a massive leap of faith and set his sights on moving to the next level in the UK but it's a career path he feels is no longer open due to the way the sport has changed.

"I was so lucky. I came over on the off-chance and I think I went 13-9 in a British championship round on the Isle of Wight. I was lucky because that was a very South African style track and I gelled with it. So the guys looked at me and said 'right you're going to come over next year, we aren't going to pay you any money but we are going to pay for you to race, give you somewhere to live and let you ride a bike'.

"If somebody came over now and went to a British championship and did exactly what I did I doubt that they'd even be noticed. It's just horrible what it's turned in to. Even the GP scene. When I first started there were like 60 guys trying to qualify and 40 really good riders qualified. It was gnarly. Just to qualify was a big thing. Now they just kind of show up – not taking anything away from the GP riders because they are amazing. But it's just back in the day the 40 guys on the line were 40 damn fast guys!

"Right now, I won't lie to you, I feel slightly bitter about it and how things have turned out and the direction the sport is going. It's sad. It's sad for my little boy, my little boy is not going to do it. Motocross is the best thing that ever happened to me. It's an amazing thing. It's the best sport in the world for sure. But I'm not going to let my little boy race a motorbike, just because of what this whole thing is becoming.

"If you put the effort that we put in into a different sport, if you reach the top three in your country at cricket or soccer, there's no way you'll be earning as little as 10 grand a year, there's no way you'll be putting stuff on your credit card just so you can play soccer on the weekend..."

"For sure when he is young we'll do it for fun. We'll progress up to a certain level. But from the start he's going to know that we are just racing for fun and we are just going to race at club level until 125s and when he's 16 years old and he still wants to do it then he can fund it himself. We are definitely not going to chase it. I'm not going to chase that whole motocross dream with him. Now that I'm a little older I've realised that there is more out there to life."

Since buying his own Suzuki Nev's happier but that Maxxis moto win still eludes him





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been looking back a lot and thinking 'sh*t, I've actually done pretty well out of this'.

As Nev talks it's obvious the decision to walk away from the Maxxis was a difficult one and a heartfelt Facebook message he posted resulted in a huge reaction from fans.

"The support after that was so awesome to see, it makes me realise that I've done something really cool in my career. Everywhere I go people are saying how gutted they are and thanks for the memories and stuff like that."

Nev also received a lot of offers for help after his Facebook message but life's just not that simple...

"There were a lot of people that wanted to help out. Financially, that's one thing but it's getting someone to look at your bike in the week, it's getting parts to fix the bike, then you've got to practice and train all week to

be at the front of the British championship, then there's getting to the races and accommodation. It's endless.

"I might've mistaken how much it took to keep an MX2 bike running at that level - I think that was my biggest underestimation. I was thinking that I was going to get two or three races out of the bike and then have the engine rebuilt. Whereas you really have to get it done after every single race."

Throughout our conversation the passion behind Nev's words is powerful. He has a lot of opinions and he's most definitely not afraid to share them...

"I went riding yesterday and there was another pro rider - a really good rider - and he just messed around all day. That pissed me off a little. I'm buying all my bikes, buying all my spares, I'm faster than him still and I could >>

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Nev's two7two Race Schools allow him to plough his passion for motocross back into the sport and at the same time have the makings of a great post-retirement business.

"Basically, in the UK I'll be flat-out with my training schools, they will be my main priority. I always had good training when I was growing up and it helped me get to where I am. So I'm just trying to pass that on. I really get on with the guys I work with."

"They've been going really, really good. I've been getting great feedback and the riders that I've been training have really improved and I get a bit of a fulfilment from that as well. Helping their confidence grow and seeing their results improve on the racetrack is awesome. It's a new chapter for me."

As well as racing in the UK Nev will take part in the remaining rounds of the South African Nationals



The Rivals!

Bradshaw's best bar-bangin' buds . . .

Over the years Nev's had some fierce rivalries and banging bars with guys he clearly respects had always been a massive source of motivation for him. So it makes sense that it's one of the aspects of not racing the Maxxis that he'll miss the most...

"It's a sickening feeling. This is from the heart. Every time I left the British championship I thought to myself 'right, we've got to go home and work hard because I've got to beat Bryan MacKenzie next weekend'.

"It's like you're always chasing something and you always want to make the next weekend better, you want to beat that guy the next weekend. But when that's gone it's not a very nice feeling. Even when I was doing it on my own I believed that I could beat those guys, I showed that I had the speed to run with them.

"I'm going to miss racing with Bryan especially and it was always nice to beat Steven [Lenoir], that guy was a big motivation for me. I won a lot of championships and I think I beat them more than they beat me - I'm definitely going to miss it.

"I'm going to try and fill my time doing a lot of cycling and triathlons and just try and keep myself sane doing stuff like that. I don't think it's really fully sunken in yet to be honest. It is nice to have something to chase, I think it keeps you living. It keeps you living in terms of 'I'm going to do everything in my power so that I can beat that guy next weekend'. It keeps you working hard, it keeps your mind focussed and it keeps you motivated."



Despite putting 100 per cent effort into finding the right settings Nev and the Husky just never gelled

Memory Lane!

Some of Nev's most treasured moments . . .

"It seems like all of my championships went right down to the wire. Culham was awesome when I won the Red Bull championship in the last race [in 2013]. The whole rivalry between the teams was intense and it was good to come out on top in that. And 2009 was also a good one, I won the Red Bull championship on the last corner of the final moto. That was amazing."

"And then the SX championship in 2012. Me and Nicolas Aubin went into the last round tied on points so whoever won that was going to win the championship. I got knocked off the track on the first lap and came through and passed him with two laps to go – he tried to stuff me on the last corner but I managed to win it. That's an amazing memory."

"Another one that I think is really cool and something that I can show my kid when he grows up a little was when I finished third in a European race. I passed Ken Roczen on the last lap! The guy second on the podium was Jeffery Herlings."

"I know they were very young at the time but that's something that I can show my boy because those riders will still be relevant when he's 10 years old. And I can say to him 'look at that son, your daddy was pretty good once'."

"Obviously, any time I represented South Africa in the Motocross of Nations was special. My first British championship overall win was at Foxhill the weekend my little boy was born – that was seriously emotional. And also pretty much every weekend over the past two years that I spent with DB Racing, those days were special. Those people, still to this day, are like my family."

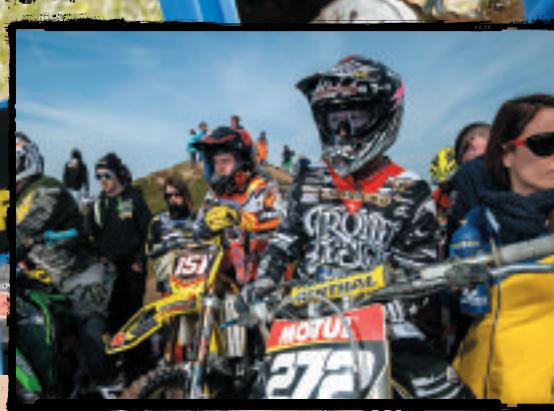
probably still go and beat him on the weekend.

"I'm out there doing 30-minute motos – which I don't have to do as this isn't a job for me anymore – and he's messing around all day. I think it has made me a little bitter, the way that motocross has turned and the money and people paying into teams and stuff. I think it has just ruined a lot of opportunities for a lot of kids that have potential."

Nev's still not short of offers to race for teams but the full package isn't there for him.

"For the last 10 years I've been paid to race dirt bikes. The people that I would be racing in the British championship – let's say between third and seventh – are getting paid to do it. So, yeah, I've been offered to go and ride for teams but there's no wages. So what's the point in putting your neck on the line every single weekend?"

"You're going to put them [the team] on the podium and put all of their sponsors on the podium but you're not going to get anything back from that. I do really appreciate everything that everyone has offered me but if it's going to be a job then I'm going to do the job properly but it's a two-way street you know."



"Racing motocross at British championship level is a full-time job. You've got to train all week. You've got to ride your motorbike all week. You've got to sacrifice everything for it. So if you are doing that job you should be getting paid for it."

The prize money available doesn't cover expenses – Nev earned £400 for his 2-2 in the MX Nationals, Britain's second-biggest series – and without a regular wage racing at a top-flight level just isn't a financially viable option.

"That's why I've scaled down. I'm just going to do it as a hobby and enjoy it. I'm going to use all of the work I have put in so far this year and over the winter to at least enjoy the rest of the year and keep me sharp to go race in South Africa. That's something that I always wanted to do once I finished racing here. So now is a good time for me to do that, everything is in line and hopefully we'll do well."

Nev's already showing good speed in the South African national series on a Vision Racing Yamaha, running third overall in MX2 and taking a double win in MX1 at round three of the series at Port Elizabeth.

"Once a month there's a South African national so I'll be flying back and forth. I got

a deal from factory Yamaha out there and they've got some good sponsors that have helped out with flights and expenses and stuff. So the plan is to properly enjoy it you know."

Despite his obvious problems with the sport Nev is still clearly in love with riding motorcycles. Circumstances may have forced his hand but the good news for his fans is he'll still be running a pretty high profile in the UK.

"I'll still be racing the MX Nationals because two of the kids in my academy race that so it will be good for me to be there on the Saturday helping them out and then to race on the Sunday. I'll probably do some centre races and if there is a race at Canada Heights I'll probably do that."

And the Maxxis series? Is there any way he could be tempted to have another shot at that unfulfilled ambition to grab a moto win?

"If I got paid a wage – not even a massive wage but enough to cover my expenses and let me do the job properly. So if I had someone to cover that and I could put in the time in the week, dedicate two days a week to riding and not have to worry about keeping my practice bike going or building race bikes all week."

The Bradshaw family +2 chill out between motos



"All that stuff takes a little edge off the weekend whereas before you were fresh – you just showed up, raced, went home, trained, practised and then raced again. So if I could get that again, a small wage and be around people that want to do well. That's a big thing, there are a lot of teams out there that just want to be there you know..."

The Maxxis series is certainly the poorer for Nev's absence but his determination, never-say-die attitude and willingness to graft – attributes he always demonstrates on the track – should see him prosper whatever he plans to do.

"Motocross is awesome. Motocross can instil something in people that nothing else can. That's why I think I'm very fortunate. If I use the same work ethic I've learned through motocross in another aspect of my life I've got no doubt I can succeed."

"My training schools for example – everyone is really pumped with them. My missus asked me why I think that is and I said to her it's because I take pride in what I do, I give them everything I have on the day. You just have to take pride and work hard and if you work hard things come good for you. That's what I believe."



Some gratitude, dude!

Heartfelt thanks from our hero...

"I really want to thank some people. This year when I've been on my own it's made me realise the people that were in it for me you know. So I'd really like to thank the Motovision boys, if it wasn't for them my dreams wouldn't have come true. I wouldn't be here now, I wouldn't have met my missus and I wouldn't have been able

to race professionally.

"I'd like to thank Dave and Vicki from DB. They still help me to this day. It's unbelievable. Dave buys me an exhaust pipe, he buys me some wheels, he says anything I need. Vicki looks after my little boy if I need to go do some motos down the road. It's amazing. It's a family."

"The motocross family is a tight family that's for sure. I've met some really, really good people and I'd just like to thank pretty much everyone and all the sponsors that have stuck with me and are still with me now."



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Persistence PAYS

Almost five years after winning his last MX2 world title Marvin Musquin is finally hitting his stride in America . . .

Words and photos by **Brendan Lutes**



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It's a narrative that happens every few years – motocross world champion moves to America to live out his dream of racing supercross. The success of these world champs has been mixed over the years – however, they are usually never far from the front of the pack. And often times these champions find success rather quickly. For former two-time MX2 world champion Marvin Musquin, success in America has been a long road filled with ups and downs but he has never given up and his persistency is finally beginning to pay off.

Since moving to America in 2011, Musquin has had race wins and numerous podiums but until this year he hasn't reached his goal of becoming a champion. And while he has shown true speed and remarkable potential, the past two years have been marred by injuries, questions and what ifs.

No one has ever doubted the Frenchman's talent and determination but these recent years have been a genuine test of his fortitude. Five years after winning his second – and so far last motocross world title – Musquin has now put the pieces together to win his first AMA supercross championship, taking home the 2015 250 East Coast title by decisively winning

six of the eight races and capping it off with victory in the annual 250 Shootout in Las Vegas.

For Marvin, he attributes three key elements of his program to his 2015 success – training with famed MX trainer Aldon Baker, the all-new Factory Edition KTM 250SX-F, and entering the season with confidence, and most importantly, a clear bill of health.

As DBR went to press, Musquin had just taken over the points lead in the Lucas Oil AMA Pro Motocross Championship and only time will tell if he can add a fourth number one plate to place next to his two world championships and supercross title in his trophy case.

DBR: You had a great supercross season...

MM: "I started with boot camp and training – everything was great. The biggest changes to my program were starting to train with Aldon Baker and moving to Florida part-time. We also got the new 2015 Factory Edition KTM which was a big step forward and it was great to work with the team to get better and more comfortable on the bike. For my last 250 season it brought me a lot of confidence to do so well."

"Having a good off-season, staying healthy and starting off the season with a win in Dallas

were all very important for the season. I really wanted to come out to the first race and win. Two years ago, I felt like I was ready to do that but it didn't happen like I wanted to and then I was hurt last year."

"Like I said, the training was really good and consistent, and I was following the program with Aldon. I listened to him, everything worked out really well, and I was going to the races confident. Winning six races out of eight, plus the shootout in Vegas – and finishing second at the two other races – I couldn't ask for a much better Supercross season."

DBR: You've always been a solid contender since coming over to America but what did training with Aldon bring to the table for you?

MM: "I feel like Aldon helped to give me more confidence and better conditioning. On top of that, I've stayed healthy this season and I have a great bike. Those three things [Aldon, health and the bike] have been my keys to being competitive. When Roger De Coster called to tell me I was training with Aldon, I didn't question it – I just started working with him. I also really like living in Florida and training with other riders."

>>



After taking the East Coast SX title Musquin's been on top form in the Outdoor Nationals

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DBR: Do you train with your team-mate

Ryan Dungey?

MM: "Yeah, there's Ryan, Adam [Cianciarulo] and Jason [Anderson]. It helps a lot. We ride together, go to the gym together, and it helps us push each other. We have fun too."

"It's kind of funny, because I had a little bit of a fight with Jason a couple years ago – it's no big deal – but now we've gotten to know each other and have realised that we're cool together. It's not like we hang out together and are best friends but we train together, have a good time and try to enjoy life."

"We have a great job but it's hard. At the end of the day, though, you have to have fun and enjoy life, so it ended up being really cool to train with the other three riders. I feel like next year, even if I'm also on the 450 like the other guys it will be a really fun year trying to help each other."

DBR: Shifting gears a little bit, your wife Mathilde is always at the races and test track with you. Can you talk a little about how she works into your program?

MM: "We've been together for about 10 years. We met when we were really young when I was racing on 85s. She loves the sport, and she was born into it, as her dad is a former race mechanic and her brother rides. Without her I don't think I'd be able to do everything that I've done. Racing is really important to me and I'm really lucky to have her on my side."

DBR: You and her will probably look back on these years of racing with a lot of fond memories.

MM: "We will for sure. Moving over from France to the U.S. was cool. She does so much for me in other aspects too which is the normal day-to-day living and stuff that for a motocross rider is hard to take care of. She also helps me so much with dirt bikes – riding, training, and supporting me."

DBR: Heading into Hangtown how much time did you get to prepare for the outdoors?

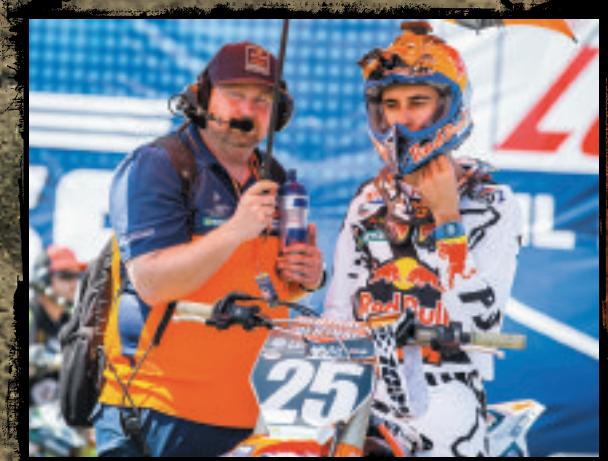
MM: "We had a break right after the St. Louis supercross and started riding with the new Factory Edition bike to get a good base set up for suspension and everything. Then we went back to Supercross for New York and Vegas before it was full on outdoors. I would say I maybe had four weeks of really riding and testing on the bike. We had a base setting but we pretty much had to start from scratch."

"It was good to get the first outdoor race done and in the books. We learned a lot and changed a lot of things during the race on Saturday. After the final supercross race in Vegas, I was really happy with my season and running the number one plate but then I was driving back home on Sunday and the next day I started testing for outdoors. There's no rest."

"It's easy to think the season is over because I had just won the championship but it's far from over. I got a little bit tired right after Vegas and it was kind of hard but I kept training and riding. Going into Hangtown, my expectations were really high, and I wanted to do really well. I've never done really good outdoors and last year I was injured so I was really happy to finally get a moto win, finish second overall and come out tied in points. I wish I could've done better but I have to be happy with how the first round went."

DBR: Coming out swinging and winning the first moto had to have felt good.

MM: "Yeah, it was good. I got a decent start and then I got into second place but dropped to fourth right after that. We had made a big change to the bike after practice and I spent the beginning of the moto adapting to the bike, but >>





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after I did, I started feeling more comfortable and finding better lines. In the second moto, I messed up my start and it was pretty much over after that because Jeremy got into the lead. Second was the best that I could've done in the second moto."

DBR: After winning the supercross championship did you reward yourself with anything?

MM: "I wish, because you get a lot of bonuses for winning that many races so it makes me want to get something cool [laughs]. But like I said, the next Monday after Vegas I was already back training – it's non-stop. I feel like if I buy anything it'll be after the outdoor season is over. I don't know exactly what I want to buy. I wish I could buy a car for Mathilde, because we have one truck here and one truck in Florida, so I kind of want to get her a car."

DBR: What meant more to you – winning your two world championships or winning the

supercross championship?

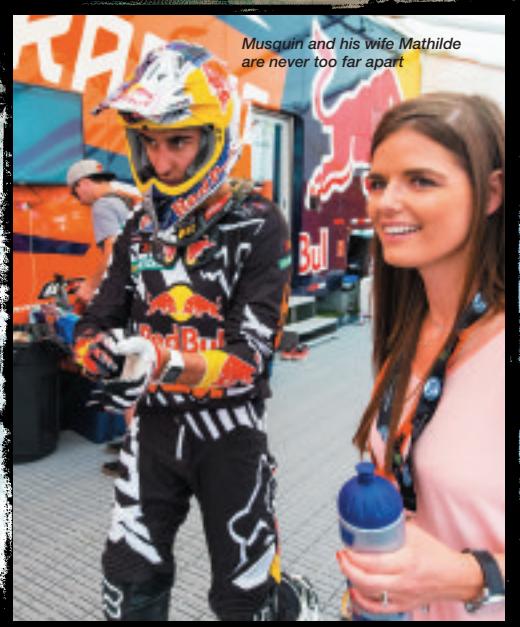
MM: "I feel like it's been a long time since I won a championship – I mean, it's been five years. The supercross championship felt really good because it's been a while. Which one is the best? I want to say this one because I love supercross. Every year is different, and I feel like I'm a different person than I was five years ago – I'm more mature, more grown up and I notice and appreciate more things. This one felt really good."

DBR: After a great start to the season, where do you ultimately want to see yourself this season?

MM: "I really want to fight for the title – that's the main goal right now. I want to be really consistent like I was in supercross and fight for first place. I feel like I'm capable but if I'm not I don't want to not be on the podium. I want to be on the podium every weekend."



Great starts are a key part of Marv's race strategy



Musquin and his wife Mathilde are never too far apart



Marv's KTM is a lean, mean, winning machine

Tooled up!



Steering stabiliser

"Marvin chooses to run a steering stabiliser."



Marvin Musquin's marvellous motocross machine

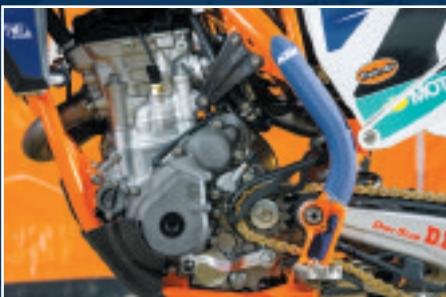
There's a lot that goes into building a fire breathing factory race bike and the Red Bull KTM of Marvin Musquin is one of the trickiest looking bikes in the professional paddock. Maintained by long-time wrench Frankie Latham, Musquin's 250SX-F has numerous custom pieces on it making it fit Musquin like a well-worn glove. With this in mind, we decided to dig a little deeper and have Latham explain five parts on the machine that most people might not notice when drooling over Musquin's bike under the factory awning.

Masterlink

"We run a pressed masterlink so that it won't pop off for some reason. It's less likely to have a problem. A lot of times when people have chains derail, it happens at the masterlink, so we'd rather have it locked. It's a little more work, but it's mainly for safety."

Front Brake

"Marvin runs a bigger front brake piston. It's an option that Brembo gives us and it provides more power which is especially good for outdoors. He likes a lot of power but he also runs the lever close to his hand."



Motor Mounts

"We use carbon fibre head stays and for Marvin it improved the handling a little bit and it cut a lot of weight."



Footpegs

"He likes his footpegs to be really sharp and have a lot of grip tape on the frame to hold onto the bike."

A full-body photograph of Marvin Musquin from behind, standing on a dirt track. He is wearing a white, orange, and black motocross suit with the number 26 prominently displayed on his back. His helmet is white with orange and blue accents, featuring the word "Airo" and a Red Bull logo. He is also wearing knee pads and Fox racing boots. In the background, there are spectators under white tents and a person taking a photo. A vertical orange stripe runs along the right edge of the frame.

Marv gets in the zone before
the opening moto of the
outdoor season



THE ERZBERG UNFRIENDLY GIANT ENDURO

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HARD ENDURO BECOMES TOO HARD...

Words and photos by Future7Media

If there's one thing you can be certain about the ErzbergRodeo is that it won't be mundane. It won't be normal. The ErzbergRodeo doesn't do normal. This year's 21st edition of the world's hardest single day enduro was no exception.

With drama in bundles, it delivered on giving its audience the hardest, toughest, most plot twisting race ever witnessed around the Iron Giant. Summing it up with four race winners and just five finishers the 2015 Red Bull Hare Scramble will long be talked about for many years to come.

Close to 30 riders reaching the finish line of the Red Bull Hare Scramble in 2014 so event organisers viewed that result as more of a failure than success. In their eyes, the course had become too easy. 2015 was a time for a

change and a big one at that.

From the outset the race was brutal. Where normally the signature sections are regarded as the major hurdles of the race, this year the majority of them were seen as a relief from the pain, struggle and torture that awaited them everywhere else.

Quickly whittling down the field, the combination of the course and intense heat ramped up the rate of attrition. One hour into the four-hour race it was clear that race organisers would have less finisher's chequered flags to hand out in 2015.

Upfront though and the race was on. A battle was brewing. Jonny Walker held the lead but with the notorious Carl's Dinner doubled in length for 2015, Graham Jarvis was cutting into his lead and Alfredo Gomez was closing in on both.

With a couple of checkpoints to go, Walker ran into a spot of drama with a damaged radiator that allowed both Jarvis and Gomez past. But unknown to him at the time, that would become the least of his worries as the following section Downtown stopped everyone in their tracks.

A secret trail, marked out at the 11th hour, Downtown was where all the drama unfolded. An impassable climb it required the efforts of Jarvis, Walker, Gomez, Andreas Lettenbichler and Wade Young combined to haul their bikes up and out of the gully.

Knowing the race was done there and then – all five riders then teamed up and rode as a group to the finish where Jarvis, Walker, Gomez and Lettenbichler were all declared winners... |



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GRAHAM JARVIS

"It's been a strange Red Bull Hare Scramble. What can I say really – four winners. I finally got a decent start and when I got to Carl's Dinner the gap between Jonny and myself was two minutes. I could see him. I took another few seconds from him there and shortly after Carl's Dinner he had stopped to fix his radiator and I got into the lead. But then we arrived to this secret new section called Downtown. It was an impossible hill climb with virgin terrain. I tried 10 times to get up it but it was impossible. Alfredo arrived second and we talked about what to do. We decided to team up but ended up needing Jonny, Letti and Wade Young to get up the hill. For me the race ended there. It's been an odd one to win."



JONNY WALKER

"I got a great jump off the line and hit the climb first with Taddy Blazusiak by my side. Neither of us backed off and unfortunately he touched my rear wheel and crashed out. Up until Carl's Dinner the race was awesome. But shortly afterwards I had a small problem with my radiator. That allowed Graham Jarvis and Alfredo Gomez past. I caught back up to them at Downtown but when it took about five minutes to move five metres I knew then that things were getting weird."

"I trekked up to Graham and we actually laughed about the situation. We knew we were screwed. The only way out was to help but we needed Andreas Lettenbichler and Wade Young to do it. Hauling five bikes up and out of that cliff-like gully is something I never, ever want to repeat."

"In the end all four of us were awarded winners. So the result is bittersweet. Yes it's great to win but it sort of sucks too. The race was awesome until that Downtown section and that's really where it ended for all of us."



CARL'S DINNER

Carl's Dinner is one of the Red Bull Hare Scramble's iconic sections. Following reports that the boulder field had somehow eased in difficulty during the last few years, organisers were quick to correct that for 2015. Giving riders a double loop, Carl's Dinner was downright cruel and evil. With the top guys taking close to 30 minutes to navigate their way through the rocks, it was the place where many mere mortals ended their day.



ANDREAS LETTENBICHLER

The veteran of the pack, Andreas Lettenbichler has more often than not been the bridesmaid of Erzberg and never the bride. Finally 2015 marked the year that Letti could say he won the Red Bull Hare Scramble. Okay, the victory came in a manner no one ever expected but like they say 'a win is a win!' Congrats Letti!



BUILD IT AND RACE!

The beauty of the ErzbergRodeo is that pretty much anything goes. If you can build it and it has two wheels then the organisers will most likely let you race it. Over the years we've witnessed many whacky and out there machines tackle the Iron Road Prologue. This year Patrick Leuchet's BMW S1000XR kept the trend alive. Converting a road-going BMW S1000XR, Leuchet essentially fitted a set of knobbles to his 1000cc, four-cylinder, 160HP weapon. Touching 170kmh in places, the Erzberg rookie thankfully made it up the prologue in one piece.



JOAKIM LJUNGGREN

Two-strokes pretty much rule the roost in extreme enduro but you don't have to look too far to find a four-stroke in the results sheet at Erzberg. Making both his Erzberg and first serious extreme enduro debut outing, Sweden's Joakim Ljunggren arrived to world's hardest single day enduro armed with a KTM 350 EXC-F. It was a move that made many chuckle but Ljunggren proved a lot of guys wrong. Despite not really knowing what to expect, Ljunggren turned a lot of heads with his ride. Making it to the foot of Downtown within the four-hour allotted time, he was credited with sixth overall. Bravo!



BRITS ABROAD!

The UK boys take on the Iron Giant... .

The ErzbergRodeo always attracts a large contingent of British talent. This year was no exception. With both Jarvis and Walker ensuring British winners, many just go for the party and the chance to qualify for the Red Bull Hare Scramble.

Drawn to the Iron Giant for the first time, KTM's Daryl Bolter gave into the attraction of Erzberg for 2015. Despite a starting number of 253, Bolter qualified 46th for a front row start. Making it as far as Checkpoint 15 – Carl's Dinner – Bolter was credited with 58th. He was joined there by Andrew Noakley (32nd) and Gary Daniels (47th) and Christopher Windle (56th).

Improving leaps and bounds in extreme enduro, Jonny Richardson bagged himself a top ten result with ninth having reached Checkpoint 18 – Killing Leap along with the Hemingway brothers Ben and Dan.

ROBBIE MADDISON

FMX nutcase Robbie Maddison swapped hitting 250 foot gaps for a chance to check out the action at ErzbergRodeo. Keen to see what all the fuss is about, Maddo has very real intentions of giving the race a serious crack in 2016. This year he only tried out his bravery on the Iron Road Prologue due to an already busted knee. While giving the Red Bull Hare Scramble a wide swerve, rumours have it that he dominated the 3AM Jaeger bomb challenge in the beer tent!



SUPER MARIO!

Mario Roman's one man mission to finish

Hats off to Mario Roman. If ever there was a rider whose performance got slightly overshadowed due to the outcome of events then it was Mario. Less than 12 months ago Roman was chasing the Enduro World Championship trail. Now he's carved out for himself a promising future in his new chosen sport.

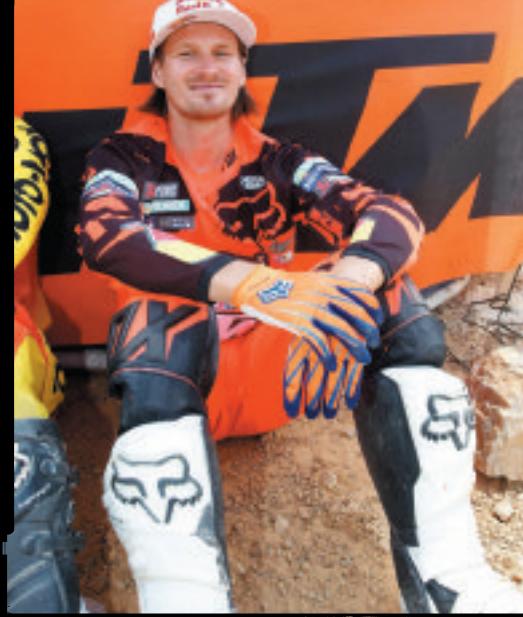
Backing up his podium result at Hell's Gate, Mario was the fifth and only other classified finisher of this year's Red Bull Hare Scramble – and he did it with a busted knee.

Prior to Erzberg he hurt his knee at the EWC GP in Portugal and needed to strap it up tight

to compete at the Iron Giant. Competing the course solo – aside from the massive help of Welsh Dragon Aled Price in Downtown – Mario didn't back down from the challenge...

"That was the hardest race I've ever done in my life. From the very beginning it was relentless. My start was okay but then I got stuck on the final big climb out of the quarry. I lost time there and was playing a lot of catch up.

"Then I got to that new section Downtown. The guys in front had all teamed up and reached the top when I made it, so I was alone. I thought fu*k! Luckily a rider who had stopped came there to help and together we worked our way to the top. I owe him so much for that help."



TADDY'S TALE!

Why Blazusiak got beat . . .

This year's ErzbergRodeo marked the long awaited return of Taddy Blazusiak. Unfortunately it proved a very brief outing. Absent from the Iron Giant since 2011, Blazusiak – a five-time winner of the Red Bull Hare Scramble – was one of the hot favourites to challenge both Jonny Walker and Graham Jarvis. Third on the prologue showed the KTM rider meant business and wasn't just there to experience the vibes.

But after all of the anticipation his race lasted a mere 15 seconds. It all went pear shaped on the first hill. Getting a decent jump off the line – and knowing that staying in front of the dust would be essential – Blazusiak got too close to Walker's rear wheel exiting the quarry floor. Tagging his front with Walker's rear, Blazusiak was sent cart wheeling back down the near vertical drop. Collected by his bike on the way back down, Taddy got his bell well and truly rung.



LONG player!

12

No: 12 | DBR Edition | August 2015



HE'S STARTED RACING AT THE AGE OF FIVE AND 41 YEARS
LATER BRIAN WHEELER'S STILL GOING STRONG...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira



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Brian Wheeler gets on the gas – at 46 he's still faster than the average racer



When I first floated the idea of a Brian Wheeler feature to Sutty his response was instant. "Only if Nuno can get a pic of him eating a cowpie!"

Big and burly with a jaw like a bulldozer blade and a spectacularly broken nose, fit Brian out in a stetson and red shirt and he definitely could pull off Desperate Dan at a fancy dress party. But while out on the track Britain's fastest veteran is every bit as powerful as the cartoon cowboy, off it he's surprisingly softly-spoken with his laid back Gloucestershire accent belying a fierce competitive spirit.

That's not to say he's not out-spoken and opinionated but this doesn't stem from arrogance, it comes from the confidence of a 46-year-old who's spent pretty much his entire life around motocross and is completely comfortable in his own skin.

For example take his opinion on the ACU's decision to lower the age riders can compete as veterans from 40 to 35. It was a ruling designed to attract bigger entries but it looks as though it might have the opposite effect and actually drive the more senior riders out of the national series.

"I just think it's bollocks," he says between races at the Hawkstone round of the Maxxis series which was doubling as round three of the vets championship. "It was done really naughtily. We'd all signed up for it and then they told us. The majority of blokes in the veterans won't be doing it next year – me included probably – if they leave it as it is."

"I contacted the ACU to say they should do it like the Phoenix Tools championship which has over 35s, over 40s and over 50s in the same race and they just score it separately. They weren't interested. The world championship, America, Belgium – the vets class is all over 40. It's only the British championship."

The change in rules has opened the door for Ryan Voase to compete and the younger man is dominating this year's veteran division with his only race defeat dished out to him by Bryan at round two.

"Even Ryan agrees. He don't class himself as a vet and if he ever comments on it he doesn't put 'vet' down, he puts down 'over 35s'. I've got nothing against Ryan, it's the ACU I've got the problem with."

Brian's plans for 2015 took a huge blow at the start of the season when his 450cc GL12 Yamaha race bike and his son Bradley's KTM 250F were stolen. Brian's a taxi driver – the day of our interview he had to rush off to pick up a fare from Bristol Airport – and without mega-bucks behind him he's been forced to race a YZ250 two-stroke.

"They were chained up in my garage and they broke in and nicked them. They cut through the chains but one of the padlocks they couldn't cut through so they took the wheel out, took the disc off, chucked the disc with the padlock on the floor and put the wheel back in. They were professionals."

Being under-powered compared to his 450-mounted rivals in the Scott Amateur Nationals hasn't been a disadvantage and he's won 14 out of 15 motos this season with only a

puncture blotting his perfect record. But against Voase and defending champion 'Factory' Phil Mercer in the British championship it's a different story.

"It's a bit frustrating on a two-smoker. The last round at Frome I beat Ryan in the second race and nearly killed myself and I thought 'I don't want to ride like this'. If I start getting a bit wobbly I'll slow up. It's like that second race [today]. Factory had a good gap, I pushed for a few laps and didn't catch him at all and I thought that if I caught him it'd take me all race and then I'd still have to get by him so I thought 'this'll do then, I'll just coast on round here'."

Brian started riding as a five-year-old, like so many of his contemporaries on a 50cc Italjet, along with his big brother Tim.

"We just had a field at the back of a farm we could go on when we got back from school. I wouldn't go down hills at first. I'd go up no problem but not down. I'd just sit at the top. I've overcome that now! I would have said I was six when I started racing because you had to be six – but I think I was more like five. I raced Severn Valley, Stroud, local races."

"Me and Tim came through everything together but it seemed as we got older that I got the legs. I went on and he didn't really. He had a few bad injuries. He went into the AMCA and I went on to do grands prix."

Brian did his fair share of winning as a schoolboy including the All-British – a big deal back in the day – before moving into the British championship in 1986.

"They had the support class to qualify and I won that and went up. Then I didn't get points >>



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so you go back down again. So I won the support championship again, went back up again and it wasn't looking too good – I had no points – and then I went to a round in Scotland and I holeshotted it. It was like the last race – if I didn't get points in this one I was going to go back down.

"Back then was when you had the full-blown factory Honda of Dave Thorpe. You could hear him coming. And I was in the lead and I was thinking 'fu*k, I've got that lot behind me'. I'd literally done four laps and he still hadn't overtaken me – it could have scarred me for life. I think [Kurt] Nicoll had gone by and Rob Andrews and the Fish [Rob Herring] might have went by but Thorpey still hadn't. Eventually I could hear it coming – it felt like my spine went – and he blitzed on by me.

"But it was a confidence boost and I ended up sixth in that race which was enough to stay up for the rest of the season and to stay up the season after. From then on I thought 'I can do this' – it gave me the confidence."

In the late '80s the British championship was stacked with talent and Brian was racing against some of the world's fastest men.

"When I started doing British championships I was racing with riders like Dave Thorpe and

Kurt Nicoll. It was so strong it was ridiculous. Then there was Willie Simpson, Rob Herring, Jeremy Whatley – just to get into the top 10 in the British championship was so hard. It was smoking."

Brian made his GP debut at Asham Woods in 1988 on a 250 but it was an inauspicious start.

"I didn't qualify but mind you I wasn't sure what I was supposed to be doing – I just went round and round and round. I was only six-tenths out but I didn't get in. The first one I got in was at Farleigh in '89 hence the reason I usually get invited to go back there because I'm the only one who's actually still riding."

That day in 1989 is a famous one in British MX history. Thorpe, having won just two of the previous 10 GP motos, doubled up in front of an adoring home crowd as he began a run of four successive overalls on his way to his third world crown. And in the opening race Brian brought his KTM home in 12th to take his first world championship points.

Back in the early '90s Brian was a solid GP rider, specialising in racing arm-wrenching 500cc two-strokes. He made solid if unspectacular progress and by 1992 had broken into the top 15 with his best result a race two fourth in Luxembourg. The same

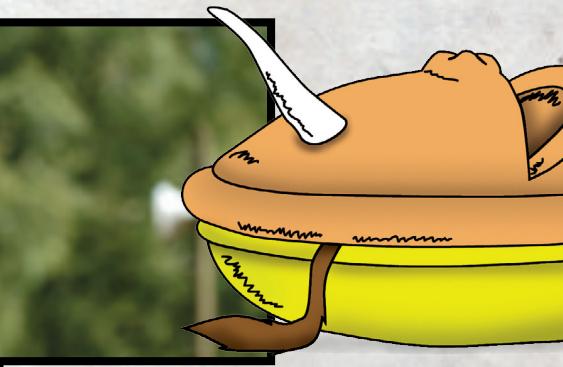
year he finished fifth in the British championship and Brian reckons that was the season he was at his best.

"I was riding for KTM UK with Mr Gordon Jones and without that bloke I would have never done nothing. I would never done what I done without that one person, that's for sure, because whenever there was an opportunity he'd make sure I had it. He'd get me in grands prix if there was a space and he backed me right the way through. He was the backbone of me coming through."

"At the end of '92 that was when I was at my fastest, no doubt about it. I went to the last grand prix in '92 and got pole position. That was when Kurt threw it away by two points. If Kurt [racing a factory KTM] won all three Jobe had to finish second three times. Kurt was gone and won all three and I actually – this is on a Motovision video – came out of the gate in the last race and just threw the bike into Jobe and then I chased him the whole way. I was going as fast as Jobe as we came from way back – he came through to second and I came through to fifth. I had the whole KTM factory cheering me on."

The following season he signed for RWJ Kawasaki and improved to 10th in the world, >>

After having his 450 stolen at the start of the year Brian relies on two-stroke power



Brian's a regular in the VMXDN



MAGIC MOMENTS

MX memories...

I've got a couple of great memories of watching Brian race. One involves a mid '90s MR Thumpercross trip to Namur and a row of English arses lining the track outside the Chalet du Monument.

Brian went well at the famous Citadel track and has a favourite memory of his own from 1992...

"Coming down onto the road at Namur, Kurt was first and I was second and the English fans were going mad. It was electric."

Then there was the British round at Finningley in '97 when Brian nailed the holeshot on a 500cc Honda and celebrated with a fist-pump over the first tabletop.

Racing EVO bikes comes easy for Brian who remembers what they were like first time around





scoring another moto fourth along the way at Namur. But, with the benefit of hindsight, Brian's not sure it was the right move.

"I was definitely at my peak and then I went to RWJ and it sort of levelled then but I was never happy with the bike. I'd got so used to the KTM I should have maybe stuck with it but it was one of those deals where I was getting flown here, flown there, I had a full-time mechanic, practice bike, everything you could want. I enjoyed it but looking back I should have done better than I did really. It just didn't happen. I was constantly fighting with the bike."

His season with RWJ marked the beginning of the end for Brian's top-flight career and after fading back down the world rankings on a mixture of Maico, KTM and Honda machinery he 'retired' at the end of 1997.

"I was 29 when I hung my boots up because it just wasn't cost effective and the young ones were coming through. When you've been up there it's difficult to cope with going backwards really but I had a very good innings."

"I stopped because I had kids and was trying to convince myself that my boy wouldn't ride. I didn't really want him to but a friend down the road started riding and the boy wanted to ride and that was it. And the boy rides lovely. It got to the point where I said 'you ride the bike as well as anybody so now it's down to you – how hard do you want to train, how much do you want to put into it?'"

With Bradley fired up to race it was only a matter of time before Brian rekindled his career but it wasn't a smooth transition back into racing.

"To be fair it took me three years to get back to a level where I was riding how I knew I could ride. The first three years I was pissed off because I knew I could ride better. It was so frustrating. Now I'm riding how I know I can ride – I'm quite good, I can ride quite well!"

"The thing is now I've got to see it through until I'm 50 I think. I did the world vets in America last year. I was on the pace but didn't get good starts so it kinda didn't happen and

I think I was fourth overall so I want to go back and have another go at that. And then I might as well keep going for another three years because then I can go over there and do the plus 50. And then that's it! Well I think so but they have got a plus 70 race over there."

With a racing career spanning 41 years – and at least another four on the cards – Brian's living, breathing proof that motocross is much more than a hobby. It's a way of life.

"The thing is about it is – and I've got friends who say the same thing – if you've got a drug problem you can get help for it and I swear to God that motocross is a drug. Anyone who gets involved in it can never pack it in. I've been adamant in trying to pack it up and then I've been like 'I'll just have the one race' and all of a sudden I'm back riding again."

"People keep telling me I love it so I guess I must – either that or I'm fu*king nuts!"

MIND GAMES

Confidence is king

"What the majority of these lads don't realise is that the top 10 can all ride the bike as well as one another. Okay, there might be one or two who can do a little bigger scrub or something but you can't say he rides the bike better than

that person, that person or that person – what you can say is that he's more confident that he's going to win that race.

"Then after that it's fitness. It's a mind game. Yeah, the bike plays a part too but you only get the good bikes when you've got the mind – when you go out there and start poking it into them then all of a sudden the kit starts coming. But maybe not so much nowadays because you can actually buy into a team."







THE MOTO MASTER!

When his motocross career was cut short by injury Rich-Mike Jones turned tutor, drawing on his experience to bring on the next generation of racers...

Words by Sean Lawless

Back in the day when Trampas Parker – one of my all-time motocross heroes – was still winning 250cc GPs I had a good thing going with a feisty flame-haired primary school teacher. Being a ginge she had a light-switch temper and one comment guaranteed to send her postal was ‘those that can, do – those that can’t, teach’...

Of course, that’s not strictly true and off the top of my head I can think of at least 10 former top-flight racers who are now running MX schools and passing on their years of experience to up-and-coming riders.

Richard-Mike Jones never quite made the grade as a racer. Sure, he was super-talented and very, very quick but a catalogue of injuries scuppered a promising career before he realised anywhere near his full potential. Despite this – and despite competition from

trainers with much more impressive racing CVs – the 31-year-old from Caerwys in North Wales has forged a reputation as one of the country’s top MX coaches.

In fact, it’s because he didn’t make the cut as a racer that Rich-Mike feels he’s got an edge when it comes to coaching. More accurately, it’s his ability to identify his mistakes and make sure his riders don’t repeat them.

“I don’t know what makes me more successful at the moment than other coaches in terms of what they’re doing wrong but I know what I bring to it,” he says. “It’s important to be organised - to be a good leader – but why I think I’ve been able to build it up is because I realise that I did it wrong when I was racing.

“Back then I was in a bubble and just couldn’t see what was going wrong. I thought I was the most unfortunate person ever – ‘why me again?’ – but it wasn’t that, I was just

getting it wrong. Completely wrong. I wasn’t prepared, I was over-trying and I lacked composure.

“All the things I was doing wrong I’d done right at different stages of my career but not realised I’d done them right. I’ve been nice and relaxed and composed and come third in a British championship race and it felt really easy. It was no stress, not a panic.”

We’ve already touched upon his injuries and at the last count Rich-Mike has broken 23 bones which is bad enough for a long career but he knocked racing on the head at 24. That’s an awful lot of experience of dealing with adversity condensed into just a few years and it’s experience he can pass on.

“Every time I came back from injury in my head I had to be challenging for third straight away and if I wasn’t third I’d be panicking and getting tight and even though I was fit I’d get >>

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absolutely knackered. And I never recognised this. I never took a step back.

"There are a lot of riders who make the same mistakes as I did and hopefully I can stop people who haven't been through that from going through it."

Rich-Mike retired from racing in 2007 but even then he was involved in coaching and while the RMJ Academy was still a few years off he had a number of talented riders under his wing.

"After about 18 months I'd done a few different jobs. I worked on the [family] farm, worked for Scott Acerbis as a sales rep, worked for a mobile phone company selling phones business to business and hated it. My passion was always motocross and I knew I had to give full-time coaching a go.

"I'd taken a massive step back from motocross but I'd always been coaching alongside my racing with Adam Derbyshire and Adam Sterry and a couple of other local lads and that didn't stop because I had a good relationship with them."

Sterry started with Rich-Mike during school summer holidays when he was six years old. Almost 12 years on the rider he's guided throughout his entire career is on the verge of the MX big time...

"Adam came to me on an auto. He could ride a bike but that was pretty much it. To see how he's doing now is mental. It's awesome. I love it. Even down to him just going to a grand prix.

"When he took the lead in the GP [of Argentina] I actually was quite calm. The day before in the qualifying race he crashed after holeshotting and came through the pack and every time he was behind someone in that corner and they went wide he'd pass them up the inside.

"So I'd seen him come out the first turn and go up the inside and then they went out of sight and I knew he was going to lead. And then he came over the jump in front. It was amazing, amazing."

It's clear that Rich-Mike's relationship with Sterry goes a long way beyond a simple coach/rider deal and as well as being a firm friend he's responsible for steering the career of the prodigiously talented teen.

"I'm his manager as well. I spoke to a few different GP teams for this year and with Wilvo I really think he's in the best place. I'd have preferred him to be MXGP this year which he could have been but not in the team I want him to be in. So we've done a two-year deal with Wilvo which will see him through into MXGP next year full-time.

"From coaching him from the age of six to him leading his first GP we've been together and I'm confident that one day we'll be having a conversation about him winning his first GP and maybe more.

"It's a brilliant story but I get equal amounts of enjoyment out of, say, one of the Rookies getting his first top 10 and seeing how happy he is and how excited his family is because that was the goal. You never hear about it in the papers because it's not big news but it's just as good a feeling. It's not all about winning races for some riders – it's about taking the next step."

The RMJ Academy officially started five years ago and is broken down into three groups. There's an eight-rider Pro Academy, a larger Rookie Academy and then there's a raft of general schools that riders can book a place on as and when they want.

Sterry is the stand-out star but the RMJ Pro Academy boasts some serious talent with Ash Wilde, Nathan Dixon, Luke Norris, James Cottrell, Dexter Douglas, Matt Burrows and Jack Bintcliffe all benefitting from Rich-Mike's tuition. There's a fair age spread with Bintcliffe >>



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the youngest at 14 and Cottrell the oldest at 25.

Coaching is structured with a carefully worked out programme but Rich-Mike ensures there's flexibility built into it so riders' individual needs can be addressed.

"This year in the pre-season we went away and worked on technique to get them up to scratch. Then they started to do motos and sprint training – what they get is a programme that they come to me and work with. I set up all the dates for the year in advance so we know where we're at but what we do isn't rigid because it's a living thing in the sense of we'll do two months and see who's progressed in what ways."

"Maybe one rider will need to do some long motos to get his mental and physical endurance up, another may need to work on sprints and another might need to work on a bit of technique. They have their own individual programmes tailored to suit their needs."

Race day is a major part of the programme so as well as coaching two or three days a week Rich-Mike is away most weekends. To ease the burden he enlists the help of Ash Wilde.

"I'll go to all the European grands prix this year, all the Maxxis British championship rounds and then I have Ash coaching for me alongside the Rookie Academy. I used to go to all the BYNs and now Ash will attend those when I can't so there's always someone there

looking after my riders.

"With any sport the mental side is a massive part and on a race day I'll speak to all my riders differently to try and get the best out of them. The riders I've worked with for the longest I can speak to in the morning and know whether it's going to be an easy day or a hard day and, obviously, depending on what mood they're in will affect how I approach them. Do I have a good stern chat with them and get them focussed or do I just let them be?"

Discipline is firm although Rich-Mike sees things from a racer's view point and is prepared to compromise.

"The adults have to do what I say. If we have a disagreement then we'll do it my way and if they're still not happy then we'll try it their way. If it's on race day and they want to take a line and I don't agree then we'll do it their way because on race day they've got to be happy and they've got to take the lines they're comfortable with."

"If we're at a practice track and they have a line they like and I disagree then they try it my way and there's no argument with that. If they're not happy with it they have to persist and then, if after getting used to a line I've suggested and they still don't like it, we'll look for a solution."

Rich-Mike works closely with physios Harris and Ross and uses highly-respected sports scientist Alan Milway to oversee his riders' fitness and nutrition.

The RMJ Rookie Academy is, obviously, a step back from the Pro programme. The spread of ages is bigger – ranging from six up to late 20s – but it's still a serious business and Rich-Mike isn't willing to cut corners.

"It's highly focussed on technique because generally with the younger riders and amateur level riders – youth and adult – they need to work on technique more than the pros do but at the same time it's still preparing them for racing."

"Alan Milway's involved too. The rookies go to him a couple of times in pre-season – it's a bit more of a general programme that he gives them and an idea of what is involved so it's a stepping stone basically."

As well as his Pro and Rookie academies, Rich-Mike also runs general training schools. They're a big part of his business in what's becoming an increasingly competitive field.

"A lot of my competition as a coach comes from people who either have raced or who still race and have had a lot more successful racing careers than I had. Then they come to the end of their career looking for the next chapter and so they do coaching. They've got a good name already, advertise coaching days and get busy."

"When I started coaching I wasn't all that busy and had to build it up and make a name as a coach to get to where I am now. So now I'm busy because I'm RMJ Academy and known for the coaching side of it, not just because I was a good racer."



Early retirement

How injuries ended RMJ's career...

I first met Rich-Mike in 2002 – a decade after the carrot-topped teacher had finally reached meltdown and slung all my clothes out of her bedroom window – on a jolly to Dubai to see him running away with the Emirates MX championship. A confident, cocky 18-year-old, the series was a turkey shoot for him.

By that point he had 10 years of solid racing experience under his belt and was just embarking on what promised to be a long and successful pro career.

"We lived on a farm so I had no problem finding somewhere to ride and then I got into it after doing a couple of local races. There was no family background within the sport but on the farm I had my own track and things progressed quite quickly."

"I had a go at a national within a year and quite soon after that I won my first national so without meaning to it got serious with the whole family going away every weekend."

It was clear to anyone watching that Rich-Mike was naturally talented but he was also impetuous, reckless and hot-tempered – factors that would hold him back and, ultimately, bring his racing career to a premature end.

"I went through the schoolboy ranks winning some races. I didn't win a national championship but I was always either up the front or on the floor. When I was about 15 I crashed at Hawkstone Park and broke my leg in three places which was a really bad injury and it put me out for the year."

"The next year I didn't race because of finances but came back when I was 17 for my final year in schoolboys and I think I finished second or third in the BYMX behind Bryan MacKenzie – I broke my collarbone in the second to last round while leading the championship."

The following year he moved into the adult ranks and in the off-season raced in the Middle East after a trip to the UAE to see a mate who coached football in Dubai landed him a surprise deal.

"I had a lot of success in Dubai – the racing out there was weak but it was good for me just because of the life experience. Looking back at the time I didn't appreciate how lucky I was."

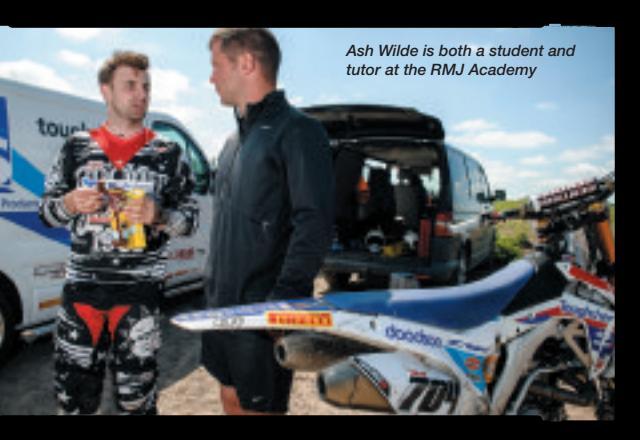
After a year of learning the ropes in the Maxxis he started to make his presence felt in 2003.

"I started to score points a few rounds in and near the end I got a top 10 and then a top six at the last round at Pontrilas and in the final race a top three. That was a big, big step. After that I signed a one-year deal with Roy Emberson and then broke both my scaphoids within two weeks of signing for him. I had an operation which wasn't successful and needed another just after the first round of the 2004 Maxxis and that was the year pretty much written off."

"I re-signed for Roy for the next season, did all the pre-season training and everything was going exceptionally well and then at round one of the under 21s I had a little fall and broke my leg. That was another year down the drain."

"I didn't have a deal the year after so I switched to the AMCA, did the IMBAs and finished second in that. The following season I went back to the ACU with my sponsor from the AMCA. I broke my femur at that time as well, then I hurt my shoulder and to be honest I was over it."





Ash Wilde is both a student and tutor at the RMJ Academy



**DBR
TESTED**

ROOST BODSITV

ALTHOUGH BORN N' BRED TO RIP AND SHRED MAX FELT THE TC 125 NEEDED A LITTLE TWEAKING SO HE TURNED TO HUSKY POWER - AND ROLAND AT HARDCORE RACING - FOR A LITTLE HELP...

Words and photos by Max Hind







Next month we'll strap Max's feet to the pegs to see if it'll stop his foot lifting off them every time his bike leaves the ground...

Over the last decade or so we've all bared witness to KTM's rise to the top of world motocross and with Husqvarna now under that same umbrella you just know that the iconic brand is going to follow in the orange behemoth's footsteps and pretty damn quickly too.

You only have to look at Max Nagl's race results so far this year to eliminate any doubt of Husqvarna's sky high intentions. To kick off this month's write up on the TC 125 I thought I would shine some light on what that success and those intentions mean for us mere mortals that go out and buy the brands that we see win on the weekends.

As you know we have the Husky TC 125 on long-term test. When the guys at Husqvarna UK delivered the bike they also handed over the machines manual and a couple other pieces of literature. The first was the Husky Style 2015 brochure. This brochure is rammed full of goodies, meaning that not only can you ride a bike like your Husqvarna heroes you can dress like them too! From key rings to casual clothing, to the full factory look race gear – and not forgetting all the other ancillaries such as luggage, chairs, watches and a whole load of other stuff – they have got it all covered in this neat little booklet.

However the one piece of literature that really got me excited was the Husky Power brochure. This little (or not so little) fella is an Aladdin's Cave of bling for your bike. From exhaust bungs to factory barrels and suspension, this brochure is 63 pages of pure MX goodness with bolt-on bits that are developed by Husqvarna from the

The VForce 3 reed block improves the TC 125's power delivery no end





A Husky Factory Start device has helped Max get away from the line more consistently on his TC 125



work that they do with the pros. I can't even begin to tell you how much mouth-watering go-faster gadgets are available in here!

In the last issue of DBR I took the TC 125 to its very first race but as I said in that report I felt I needed to improve the ol' girl slightly in a few areas. Therefore I headed straight home and picked up the Husky Power brochure and took full advantage of this wonderful tool.

The first two items on my shopping list were just simple maintenance parts to ensure that I look after my new pride and joy properly. These bits came in the form of an exhaust bung and an air box cover to use when washing the bike (naturally both in Husky blue). However the other two pieces were items that I felt the bike really needed after my first race.

The first of which was a holeshot device or 'Factory Start' as Husky call it. The TC 125 is such a snappy little thing, I felt I needed some help in the start department to tame her and keep the front wheel closer to the ground, in turn helping my holeshot hopes!

When the Factory Start arrived I was impressed with its quality as well as the 'blingness' of its anodised blue button. Although it wasn't until I was fitting the device to the bike that it hit home just how forward thinking Husqvarna is as a company. I have fitted of few of these devices over the years to a few different models of bike and the standard procedure is for them to come with a paper template that you stick to the fork guard so you know where to drill the holes...not all that factory if you ask me.

However when I opened the Factory Start from Husky there was no such paper template. It wasn't until I got the fork guard off the bike when I noticed it was already pre-marked from the factory in three places for the holeshot device with a high, low and medium option. So all I had to do was pick the position, drill the hole and Bob's my uncle. It's no wonder the KTM/Husqvarna powerhouse is doing so damn well when they are as forward thinking as this – making things ever so simple and easy for their customers.

The next item I wanted was an oversized front brake disc. I had a few sketchy moments out braking myself down the hills in my first race on the Husky and after having one last year I know just how effective these oversized disks can be! Luckily Husky offer several choices of brake discs in the Power brochure. I opted for a 270mm Moto Master flame brake disc. This little baby really does do the job and combined with the Factory Start I'm now able to start and stop to my heart's content! These two minor parts have really helped to improve an already impressive bike.

The last improvement for this month came courtesy of Roland at Hardcore Racing. He recommended that I try a VForce 3 reed block so I did. This was seriously easy to fit and it wasn't long before I was at a newly revamped East Anglian Super Trax (AKA East Trax) ready to give this month's final improvement a test.

Off the bat I could feel the difference. I felt I had more throttle response lower down and at lower revs. This was particularly useful at the newly revamped East Trax as they have added a few hefty sized jumps which can be a bit of a stretch onboard the little 125. A couple of these jumps are straight out of corners which can be tricky!

However, now that I've got a little more throttle response lower down I felt a lot more confident leaving the bike in a higher gear as I navigated the corners, I could then squeeze on the power, be in the right gear to hit the jump and make the leap. Happy days!



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EASY REEDING!

Perk your two-stroke's power up with a new set of reeds...

Words and photos by Rod Bateman

Pretty much all of us know what reeds are and where they go but maybe few appreciate the absolute value they offer for the two-stroke world. All manufacturers of motocross two-strokes use reeds, or reed valves to be more precise yet it remains doubtful that many of the DIY geeks actually understand what their purpose is. We do not advocate you should remove them out of curiosity to merely identify the change in characteristic of how your power is bundled but ask you to trust us in the sense that you would notice a serious flaw in power delivery and top-end power – they are that significant.

Believed to have been introduced to motocross in the two-stroke heyday by Husqvarna when racers looked for any increase of power, reeds then became standard on all popular machinery in the 1970s and '80s.

The theory is simple, they suck open on the induction stroke to allow fuel in and close on the compression stroke to prevent the fuel charge simply pouring back into the intake duct. This results in a 'crisp' instant power delivery. The harder an engine revs, the greater the suction which opens the reeds further.

For over three decades Boyesen have pioneered in the development of reeds from single petals of composite materials to the dual stage reed and beyond. The dual stage uses a smaller more flexible reed laid on a stiffer big reed – almost like a window within a door where to let a breeze pass the window can open, yet for full effect, the door opens. Simple!

Now we have carbon reeds as a new generation of technical wizardry optimises the future – a long way from the early metal reed petals that came as standard spec as the Japanese mass produced high-revving engines to a budget. The theory has changed little with the most development being merely down to materials.

Reeds that do not fully shut are robbing efficiency, muffling that low-end punch and any low-end burble or hesitant power introduction you may feel on your two-stroke is likely your reeds being fragmented or fatigued.

It's an easy fix. Typically priced between £40 and £100 depending on type or brand, reeds punch well above their weight in the pounds for permanence stakes and the check is child's play.



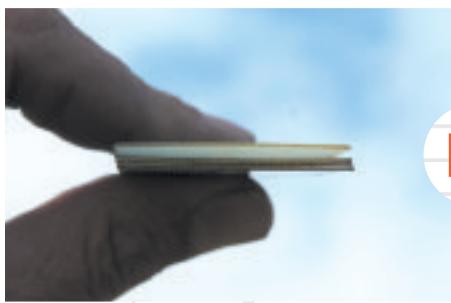
01 We presume that if you have the desire to change your reeds, you can get as far as removing them from your bike. Carb off and reed block out...



02 The best way to check them is to hold them up to the light, the reeds should seal against the reed cage and not allow any visible light to pass. These reeds are obviously in need of attention.



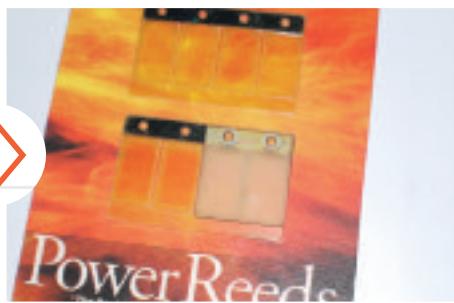
03 Use the right size screwdriver to remove the petals. Aftermarket reeds often use a steel plate to secure them in position, some variations have a more substantial slotted plate. All are secured with small screws.



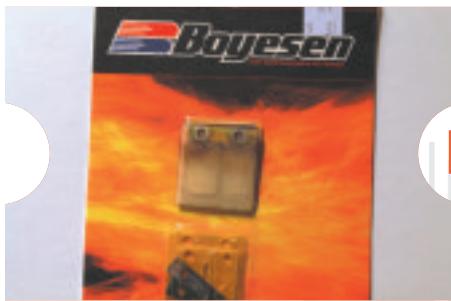
04 It is possible a good clean and repositioning upside-down will extend their life but in this check it becomes clear these reeds are beyond service.



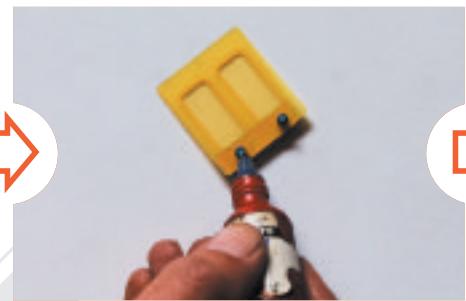
05 Clean the block, any dirt on any face is a potential air leak, or will prevent the reed petals sitting flat and sealing. Nothing more abrasive than a scotch pad or rag should be used.



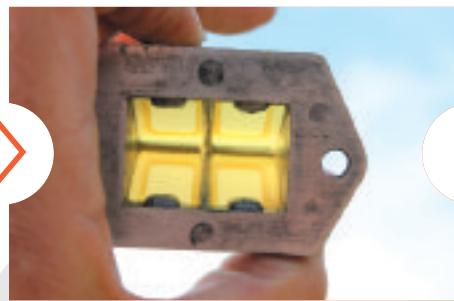
06 Place the removed reed on the pack, check you have the right ones because they are none returnable once open. Boyesen packs have the clear ability to check. This is best done at the store.



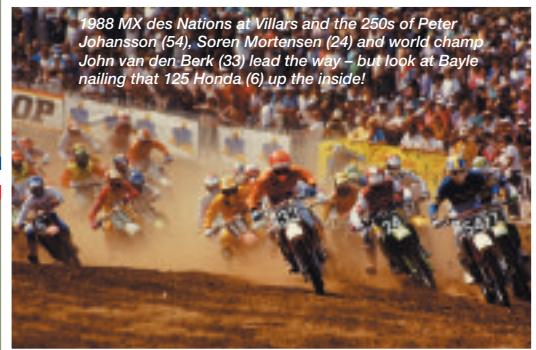
07 Satisfied you have the correct items, carefully open the reeds packaging. These are fragile items and damage will prevent correct function.



08 Assemble the reeds, instructions are included with most manufacturers' packs but essentially, use a tiny spot of blue thread lock. If these screws come adrift, they will mangle your piston, head or bore.



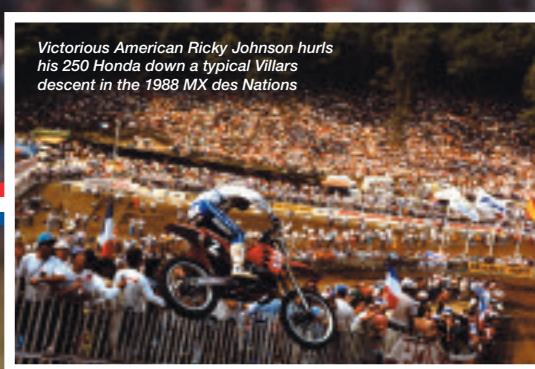
09 Built up, the same test that identified the failing will satisfy you that they are correctly fitted and ready to go back in your bike. It is likely you will notice an immediate difference in the performance.



1988 MX des Nations at Villars and the 250s of Peter Johansson (54), Soren Mortensen (24) and world champ John van den Berk (33) lead the way – but look at Bayle nailing that 125 Honda (6) up the inside!



French fans celebrate their best ever MX des as dusk falls over Villars sous Ecot in 1988



Victorious American Ricky Johnson hurls his 250 Honda down a typical Villars descent in the 1988 MX des Nations



Jacky Vimond (500 Yamaha) thrills the French fans as he launches the home team into the lead at the '88 MX des!

French *Toast!*

JACK RAISES A GLASS TO VILLARS SOUS ECOT – POSSIBLY ONE OF THE FINEST MOTOCROSS CIRCUITS ON THE PLANET...

Words and photos by **Jack Burnicle**

Should you be driving south east through France towards Montbeliard and the Swiss border on Autoroute A36 you'll pass one of the most magnificent motocross tracks in Paradise. And although it only hosted three French GPs and a truly unforgettable Motocross des Nations, the steep-sided, narrow valley of Villars sous Ecot has a rich niche in the sport's history.

Which makes all the more wonderful the news of this great track's return to world championship action in 2015, joining those other recently rejuvenated GP venues of Maggiora and Hyvinkaa.

The 'Association Motocycliste de Colombiers-Villars' actually started out in 1967 organising pirate races outside the auspices of the French Federation, who they joined in 1968. They promoted their first 'Prit de Galon' international at the 'Circuit La Versenne' in 1973 and welcomed the French 500cc championship two years later.

They also briefly, in the mid-seventies, held road races round the local Lure-Malbouhans aerodrome, which was returned to military use in 1979! The French enduro series visited in 1981 before the club hosted the opening round of the 1982 500cc world championship. Heavily wooded along one flank, this fabulous track crackled with atmosphere, enthusiastic French fans crushed against paling fencing or perched round the valley sides in their thousands.

1982 found the established old guard warily welcoming a hot teenage prospect into their midst for his first full grand prix season.

Riding a Kawasaki, David Thorpe had recovered sufficiently from a badly broken leg to feature prominently in the closing rounds of 1981 and was now prepared to take on the established big guns. Thorpe wasn't the only rookie to join the ranks. Yamaha's reigning world 250 champ Neil Hudson was also stepping up on the fearful air-cooled YZ490 alongside Hakan Carlqvist to take on the combined might of Honda and Suzuki.

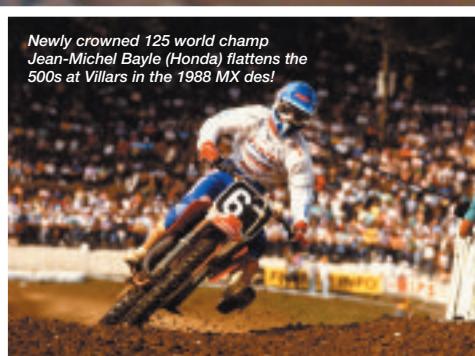
Race one went as most predicted, double world champion Andre Malherbe winning ahead of Suzuki duo Brad Lackey and Andre Vromans, Yamaha team-mates Hudson and future Dakar hero, bearded Italian 'Fast Franco' Picco, with Thorpe sixth ahead of fellow Englishman Billy Aldridge (Suzuki).

Carla missed the opening three rounds due to a busted wrist and Graham Noyce was the only big hitter who failed to score. Race two proved a revelation as Thorpe led for 30 pulsating minutes from Malherbe before giving best to the 1981 champion but the teenaged Brit remained coolly composed in second place ahead of Noyce, Hudson, Jaak van Velthoven (KTM) and Suzuki trio Lackey, Jean-Jacques Bruno and Vromans.

Third overall in a tiebreaker with Lackey, David's impact was perfectly illustrated when we were headed to Zurich in Kawasaki boss Alec Wright's hire car afterwards. We sat stationary in a huge traffic jam through the village of Villars, queuing for the A36, Thorpe and fiancée Sharon in the back, when a French fan in the car alongside recognised DT. Pop-eyed with excitement he promptly

>>

Newly crowned 125 world champ Jean-Michel Bayle (Honda) flattens the 500s at Villars in the 1988 MX des!



500GP rookie Neil Hudson (Yamaha) enjoys the magic motocross heaven of Villars in 1982



Dave Thorpe leads world champ Andre Malherbe in the 1982 French 500GP – their first duel of many!

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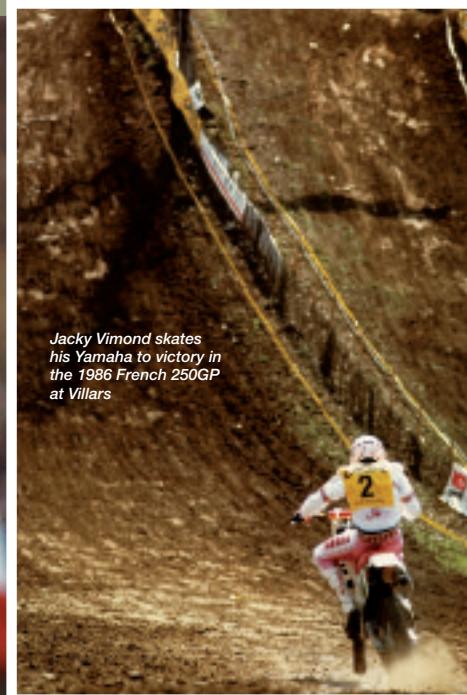
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Ron 'Dogger' Lechien (500 Kawasaki) soars to double win in 1988 MX des Villars



Teenager newcomer Dave Thorpe astounds everybody by leading the first moto of the 1982 French 500GP



Jacky Vimond skates his Yamaha to victory in the 1986 French 250GP at Villars

hit the car in front. I've never forgotten David convulsed with laughter at the poor sap's misfortune!

Four years later the 250 GP circus arrived for round three of a 1986 world championship in which Frenchman Jacky Vimond (Yamaha) had already won the opening two contests in the Netherlands and Austria. Nothing less than a repeat performance would do the vast clamouring crowds and Jacky duly delivered in race one beating team-mate Michele Fanton, swashbuckling Swede Peter Hansson (Husqvarna) and Michele Rinaldi's Suzuki. Kristian Whatley's Dad Jeremy, mounted on an Italian Cagiva, had missed the first two GPs with a broken collarbone and made his return with a sixth place behind dashing Dane Soren Mortensen.

In race two Vimond was beaten by hard charging Dutchman Gert-Jan van Doorn on the Venko Honda but easily took a loudly acclaimed third successive grand prix victory after Hansson, Whatley and Rinaldi were all sidelined, the latter in a spectacular crash.

Two years later Vimond, who went on to become France's first world champion that season, returned as a member of their MX des Nations squad, mounted on the sleek aluminium-framed factory YZM500.

By now the Moto-Club de Villars had taken over as organisers. Vimond's team-mates were both on Hondas, newly-crowned 125 World champ Jean-Michel Bayle and 250 rider Yannig Kervella. They were headlined in programme notes written by Yannig's father Herve (head of the French Federation!) as 'Deux Champions du Monde...et un Joker'.

During Saturday afternoon a series of needle matches erupted out on track. Holland's newly crowned world 250 champion John van den Berk (Yamaha) hooked up with Californian Ron Lechien on his 500 Kawasaki. Lechien's teammate Ricky Johnson (250 Honda) shadowed and eventually passed Bayle's 125 which later enthralled an already enormous crowd in a fantastic feud with third American Jeff Ward (125 Kawasaki). "J-M BEEEEE, J-M BEEEEE!"

shrieked the course commentator.

50,000 fans packed the valley the following afternoon, September 11, the whole place crackling with eager anticipation. 46 starters representing 23 countries lined up in two rows for the first of three motos.

Lechien, a smooth, rangy rider, hit the front and stayed there, his pit board ordering him to 'Stay Loose'! In contrast Bayle, 17th on lap one, made astounding progress before attacking sixth-placed Ward, the leading 125, and their epic duel had the valley in uproar. This was when the 125s scored separately so the outcome was vital.

Meanwhile up ahead 34 year-old Swedish superstar Hakan Carlqvist was taking his final bow on the private Kawasaki he'd made history with four weeks earlier by stopping for a beer at Namur's Monument Café en route to victory in the Belgian GP. 'Carla' looked strong in third place just astern of US-based Australian Jeff Leisk (500 Honda) until Vimond squeezed past the Kawasaki.

Then, as 'JMB' passed and left Ward, Vimond caught second-placed Leisk. Excitement reached fever pitch, the whole valley reverberating to the deafening chant of "JACK-EE, JACK-EE, JACK-EE!" For one glorious lap 'Maximum' Vimond nicked second place and France was tied for the lead with the USA on three points apiece. Then he slid to earth, remounted fifth and the magic moment was gone!

But those fantastic fans simply switched their attention to Bayle, who overtook Carla and collided with Leisk before, as the valley shook, stabbing his 125 past the Aussie amid an incredible din to snatch second overall, seven seconds behind Lechien!

France was still well-placed on five points to America's three with Sweden a fine third ahead of the Netherlands and Australia. Johnson then stormed to the front of race two, applauded almost as loudly as any Frenchman but Bayle crashed heavily and thrown to the side of the track, couldn't retrieve his Honda until the field had flown by. Dead last, he coolly stopped for

fresh goggles before ripping back to 15th place overall and fourth 125 while Kervella struggled unsuccessfully to stave off Jeff Ward on the leading 125.

Johnson no-handed the steepest descent and waved a leg across the tabletop. The fans loved it and America's 1-2-1-1 score line meant they had an already impregnable advantage. A catastrophic third race start, triggered by a faulty gate, sucked unlucky Carlqvist into the bales and broke a photographer's leg. The resultant 30-minute delay cranked up tension to an unbearable level.

Finally Leisk and Lechien powered their 500s to the front round the curving, slick hard-packed start straight while Johnson, from the second row, was buried outside the top 20. From there 'Too Hip' commenced one of his majestic powerhouse surges through the pack as Leisk held Lechien at bay until half-distance and flamboyant British teenager Rob Herring, in his last race with Yamaha, closed on them both and eventually followed Lechien past Leisk into a sensational second place overall and top 250.

Frantic midfield action, so vital for team points, saw Vimond emerge fifth ahead of Italian veteran 'Beppe' Andreani (250 Honda), Finn Pekka Vehkonen (250 Yamaha), Carlqvist and Kervella. Those two top 10 places ensured a sensational second overall for the home team with Sweden still a fabulous third until the cruel closing stages when Peter Johansson's 250 Yamaha ground to a halt with a broken gearbox to deny Carla a final, fulminating farewell on a French podium. Finland stepped forward instead to mount their first-ever MX des rostrum and the vast, sporting crowd gathered to pay generous homage to their American idols and homespun heroes.

France being blessed with so many magnificent venues, another decade would pass before Stefan Everts (Honda) won a final 250GP at Villars in 1998. But now, 17 years on, the vibrant 'Circuit de la Versenne' is returning to its rightful place in the pantheon of world championship motocross.

ENDURO TITLE WONDER!

CAN FINN EERO REMES DO THE
UNTHINKABLE THIS SEASON AND
BEAT CHRISTOPHE NAMBOTIN TO THE
ENDURO 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP?

Words and photos by Future7Media





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ENDURO WONDER

France's Christophe Nambotin nearly enough dominated the Enduro 1 Championship in 2014. Despite it being his first professional season racing four-stroke machinery, the KTM factory racer notched up 11 wins from 14 starts and wrapped up the title with a round to spare.

Growing stronger and stronger during the latter stages of last year, with Nambotin opting to stay on in E1 for 2015 most saw him as the rider to beat. Many expected him to dominate in impressive fashion.

But Namb's three losses during 2014 gave another man hope – serious hope. Last year the very experienced and very fast Eero Remes was the only guy to beat Nambotin. Three wins in Greece, Finland and Sweden gave the pint-sized Finn a lot to think about over the winter months. Working hard to improve his game, Remes came into this year's EWC series confident of being a bigger threat for overall honours.

Five rounds into this year's seven round championship fight and things have swung in Remes' favour. The TM Racing rider is now leading the Enduro 1 World Championship. It's not by a surmountable amount – actually it's one-point – but it's his name on top of the standings with four days to go. Suddenly we've got a title fight. One of David versus Goliath proportions. Can the small but mighty Italian factory of TM Racing take on and beat KTM in 2015? Eero Remes is currently proving they can...

DBR: Congratulations Eero, you're the new Enduro 1 World Championship leader and everyone's talking about you winning a first world title...

ER: "It is great to be leading the world championship but I still feel the same as >>

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WONDER!

I have done all year. I'm still focused on doing my job race to race. It's nice to know that things are working in the right direction, it's nice to be in first place but I don't want to get carried away, there is still a lot of racing left to do."

DBR: By winning three races in the last four days of the series you've really brought this E1 championship alive. How do you see it?

ER: "I'm really pleased with how the year is turning out and in particular these last two rounds. I feel like I've really turned the championship around and I can see there's a title to fight for. Greece was great – possibly beyond what I expected there. To come away with a double victory is about as perfect as it gets."

DBR: Taking the championship lead at your team's home race in Italy must have been a special feeling?

ER: "Italy was nearly almost as good as Greece. I would have loved to win both days – I was riding good enough to – but it didn't happen. But that's okay, I scored more points than Christophe and overall that was the most important thing for me there. I rode strong both days but mistakes on day two cost me. Actually I had a big moment on the cross test and then I stalled the engine on the extreme test and few

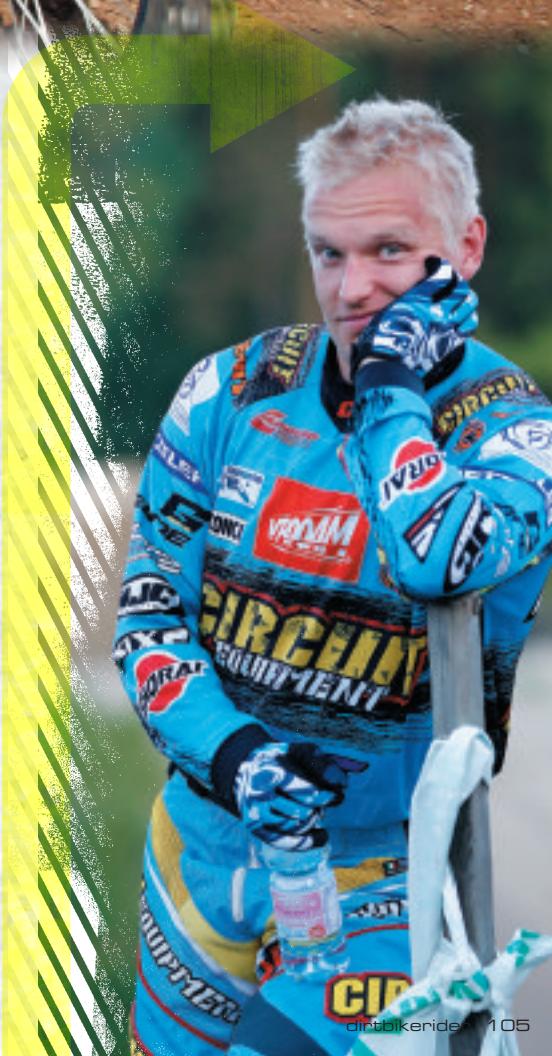
seconds were enough to lose the day."

DBR: As the only rider to beat Nambotin in 2014 did you feel that you could bring the title fight to him in 2015?

ER: "I believed I could. But I've been in this sport long enough to know how it goes in racing. So much has to come together to make it happen. Thankfully, this year it's finally coming my way. Winning those three races in 2014 gave me a big boost of confidence and motivation heading into the off-season. You always work through the winter with a focus on being title ready for the following year but this year, let's just say, it was easier to get the work done."

DBR: In racing it's one thing to win a race but winning a championship is something completely different. It's about consistently winning and being thereabouts every race. How do you view consistency in racing?

ER: "It's pretty much everything when it boils down to becoming a world champion. It's failed me in the past and I've had to learn from that. Consistency is why Christophe has been so strong. Of course he's fast but he rarely makes mistakes, he rarely finishes less than second – I can't remember when he was last off the podium. Even on his bad days he can still win – that's why he's a three-time >>



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Fuelled Magazine is totally different from the dirt up. Putting a box-fresh twist on the world of off-road, it's a quarterly collectable that's essential reading for any self-respecting fan. Showcasing the sports we love in a unique way, it's 100 pages of awesome images shot exclusively for Fuelled by some of the biggest names in the business. If a photograph is in Fuelled you won't see it in print or online anywhere else. The jaw-dropping imagery is backed up by razor-sharp words and a clean white page design that will make it the most talked about off-road publication of 2015. Issue one includes Ryan Villopoto, Laia Sanz, Buildbase Honda, Hard Enduro, Vertigo Trials, the Millard Brothers plus much, much more...

world champion. Finding the level to ride at that can allow you to be there at every round is important. I feel like I've found it now and that's why things are going well now. Of course my goal is to still win races, as many as possible, but when I have a bad day I still need to score big points."

DBR: Both Nambotin and you are at the head of the class but this year's group of E1 riders are proving very competitive – there isn't much room for errors is there?

ER: "The depth of talent in the class is big. There are a lot of good riders and most days the times between everyone is not that big. A mistake might not just cost you the win but also a podium result. It's that close."

DBR: Now that you're leading the points standings, how important is the penultimate round of the series in Belgium?

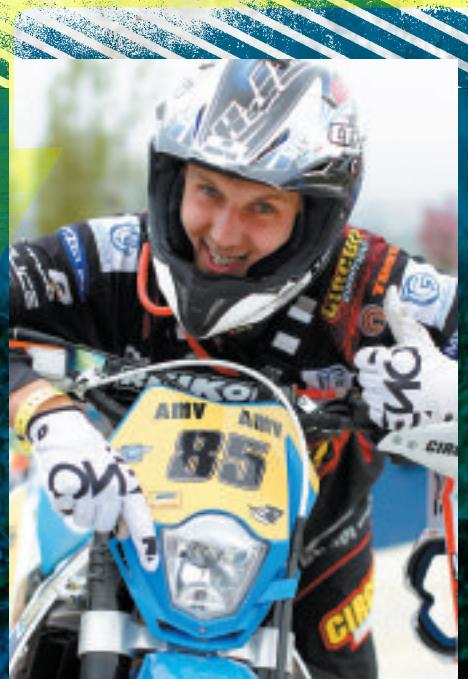
ER: "I suppose the importance of it has just gone up a level or two! Every race is big but

with only two rounds left it's definitely important to at the very least hang onto my championship lead. There's about a two-month break between Belgium and the final round in France. Another win in Belgium and maybe stretching my lead by a few more points will ease the pressure going into that summer break."

DBR: You're now in your third season with TM Racing, has it been a case of taking small steps to get to this point?

ER: "Partly, but the focus has always been about going forward – the goals have always remained the same to be honest. I think it's just been a matter of a lot of things gradually falling into place to arrive to this position. I had to learn the team, and I'm sure they had to learn me. We meshed together very quickly but those little elements that become significant take more time to learn. It's been enjoyable and I'm glad now their faith in me is paying off."

DBR: TM Racing is a small, somewhat >>



AN INSIDER'S VIEW

Aigars Leok on TM team-mate Eero Remes

Wild-eyed Aigars Leok is one of Eero's closest companions both on and off the track. Pretty much strangers until Remes joined TM three years ago, the duo travel, eat and share hotel rooms together at the races. Chalk and cheese – Aigars talks a lot, Eero not so much...

"Eero is a really great guy and I'm not just saying that because he's my team-mate. I first got to know him three years ago when he joined the team. I was still fresh into the sport and learning all the time. I didn't quite know him then, I just knew he was a really good rider. The first time we met was funny. It was at the airport in Chile on the way to the first round of the championship.

"I think the drive was about 250 kilometres and for the entire journey he spoke like about four words. I thought to myself 'what's going on here, this guy says nothing'. I was cracking up with the thoughts of having to travel together all year. But then I got to know him and found out that's his way. But he doesn't need to say much because he's funny.

"This is now our third year working together. We always try to meet at the airports about the same time. We travel to the races, walk the special tests, go to the training track. It's good, I've learned a lot from him but also that I don't need to copy everything he does. All riders are different and work different ways. It's been good, a lot of fun and yes, it would be awesome if he could win the title – he's worked hard for this success."



WON



WONDER!

understated factory. As a man of few words do you think they suit you better?

ER: "I don't think they suit me any better than say KTM did but I really enjoy working with them. TM are small but they've got a big passion for racing – they live and breathe it – they want to win as much as I do."

DBR: Does having a former rider like Luca Cherubini as team manger help?

ER: "Most teams in enduro are managed by former riders but Luca is probably the most recent rider to make that transition from racer to manager. We raced together, he was a good rider, still is, and that helps massively when it comes to picking lines in tests during the day. He knows me, he knows my riding style and it definitely works having him in my corner."

DBR: Your 250F is practically a new bike for 2015 how does it compare over the previous model?

ER: "The bike is radically different than what I had when I arrived to TM. They've really

worked hard on many things. One major thing is moving the fuel tank to a central position. That's massively improved the handling of the bike, especially the front end. It feels much lighter in the corners and is easier to turn. The power is good too and the engine is stock. Nobody really believes us on that but it's true. Overall we've got a great package, it's winning races and now leading the E1 championship so I can't fault anything at the minute."

DBR: Finally, now that you are in control of the points lead heading into the final two rounds of the series, can you think about becoming world champion?

ER: "I want to think about it but I don't want to tempt fate. I've been chasing this dream for a few years now and we're finally getting close to making it a reality. Like I've said before, there's still a long way to go, we're still fighting for race wins more than anything. I'll keep pushing like I am and maybe just maybe it will all come our way."



AN INSIDER'S VIEW

TM Team Manager Luca Cherubini's take on Eero Remes

A former EWC competitor, Luca Cherubini is now in his fifth year acting as team manger for TM Racing's enduro exploits. He's long followed Eero's career, firstly as a rival and now as a manager. Developing a close working relationship during the last three years has created a tight bond between the small knit team.

Now for the first time in a very long time, TM are leading a class of the Enduro World Championship. Luca is confident Eero is the man that can lead them to glory in 2015...

"What Eero has done so far this season has been incredible. To be in this position in the championship with two rounds to go is fantastic. TM Racing are a small company and I can't remember the last time we've led a world championship. For me it's my fifth year acting as team manager and now the first time that we're at the top of the point's standings. For now this moment is fantastic and whatever happens next will be just a bonus for us this year."

"Eero is such a professional guy to work with. He's very experienced and knows what he wants. During 2013 and 2014 he only asked for some small changes to the bike. This year we launched the next model of the 250F and he's instantly gelled with it. He's loved it from the first moment."

"Having Eero in this position shows that TM are very serious about enduro and what we do. As a small company it's easy to become overlooked by the bigger players but we're playing hard with what we've got and it's working in our favour."





TRACK

MILDENHALL GETS THE ROYAL VISIT FROM TOOFAST MAX...

Situated in a quiet corner of Suffolk not too far away from a USAF air base, Mildenhall is one of the country's staple race tracks and is open for practice every Tuesday, Thursday and some weekends.

With many of the most prestigious events in the country – such as the GT Cup, the Eastern Centre series and the Master Kids – choosing to utilise the track it can be a very good idea to get your ass down to Mildenhall for some practice motos before the big race!

Originally built and designed by Stuart Nunn and his son – former British champion Carl – the track was taken over by the present owner Cliff Bastick in 2003. Today the track bears little resemblance to its original form but one thing that has remained and has almost become a landmark in British motocross is Mildenhall's over/under bridge. It's a damn cool feature, something straight out of an AMA SX track design and something that not many motocross tracks can boast.

The track is surrounded on all sides by large noise preventing banks and tall fern trees making it quite a cool, scenic location. Those noise preventing banks also make for great viewing areas and provide audiences with incredible vantage points to watch battles commence the whole way around the circuit. The viewing is so damn good at Mildenhall that it almost feels like you're inside a giant supercross stadium. Yep it's that good!

The natural soil of the track is fairly sandy but quite hard underneath. Don't get me wrong it's certainly not a hardpack track but you won't find the Lierop levels of bottomless sand here. This means that you can find a good mix of sand berms and rollers as well as deep ruts and square edge braking bumps.

One thing that the Basticks have been very good at is introducing more sand to the track and ensuring that the circuit is fast and flowing. You'll often find that if you haven't visited Mildenhall in a while you'll return to find a Lommel like corner in a place that once wasn't too sandy at all.

As has been mentioned the track is fast and flowy and on the majority of the corners you'll have the deep ruts or sand berms on the insides but you'll also find great banks to use on the outside to really carry your speed and let it rip. These outside banks/berms are pretty weird and unique to Mildenhall – they are literally banks or walls with nice ruts or lines in to utilise. If you get 'em right these two-strokes lines – as I like to call them – can be damn fast and damn fun. But if you mess 'em up or lose your balance it's very easy to park it up against the wall!

One of the only negatives about Mildenhall is its relatively short lap. Coming in at only 0.8 miles the fast boys can get around the track in no time at all meaning that on a busy day the track can feel a bit crowded. But do not despair, within the next few months plans are in place to extend the track and up the lap times over the two minute mark.

It is clear to see that both Cliff and Chris Bastick are very passionate about the track. This is apparent not only in all the time and effort that will be put towards this new extension but also in the tireless, almost OCD level of track prep that is put in before each and every opening day.

In terms of difficulty Mildenhall is a tough one to judge. As has been stated it is a reasonably short lap and early on in the day when the track is smooth (due to Cliff's impeccable grading skills) most riders will be able to tackle the challenge. But as the day wears on and the track gets rougher and rougher the challenge may become a little daunting for some – particularly beginners and those just starting out.

This means that the track is a great training ground for those higher level riders. The combination of just how rough the track can get and a couple of the more difficult obstacles, such as the 'big' table top and the step ups/downs, means that Mildenhall can challenge even the most skilled amongst us. Yet it is not so difficult that the lower level riders will struggle to make a lap.

However for some of the kids trying the hang it out around a rough Mildenhall on a busy practice day it may be a little too intimidating. This is why part of the plan for the new extension is to build a top quality kids track for bikes up to 85cc.

This (once it has been built) is just one of the facilities that Mildenhall has to offer – there's a kids BMX track to keep the young 'uns out of trouble, a spares van every opening day, a meeting room, jet wash amenities, flushable toilets and showers in a purpose built wash block, a medical centre, a burger van on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the poshest cafeteria you'll find at a motocross track is open on the weekends!

Cliff also encourages coaches and trainers to make use of his track as the circuit is very good for this type of work with lots of run off space and the ability to create shorter loops to work on specific sections.

One of the trainers that certainly makes use of the track is Mildenhall's own Chris Bastick. Chris's Train 2 Gain schools make use of the track every week, he coaches and teaches beginners right through to the expert racers. You can find more about this and the coaching possibilities at Mildenhall on the Train 2 Gain Facebook page.

In summary Mildenhall is a very well designed track with some cool and challenging obstacles that most riders should be able to conquer. Yet at the same time it can serve as a top notch training ground that can push even the most talented riders to their limits. With all the facilities you could want or need, situated in a nice peaceful corner of the country, a day's practicing at Mildenhall is always a good one and could prove pivotal especially if you happen to have a race coming up at the track!

Conclusion

>**Difficulty** > It's a big boy's track

>**Fun factor** > Fast + flowy = fun!

>**Facilities** > They've got you covered!

>**Overall DBR score** > Fast, flowy, fun – a real man's track

Don't forget to check out our YouTube channel at youtube.com/dbrmagazine to see Max's POV edit from Mildenhall



ESSENTIAL INFO!

MILDENHALL

Location: West Row, Suffolk IP28 8QL

Length: 1375 metres (0.8 miles)

Prices: Kids £25, Adults £30

Facebook: Mildenhall MX Ltd

Surface: Sand

Shop: Yes (spares van)

Catering: Yes

Kids track: Coming soon

Bike Hire: No

Coaching: Yes

Jet Wash: Yes

Toilets/wash block: Yes (toilets and showers)

Opening times: Tuesday, Thursday, Weekends 10am – 4pm

Difficulty: Medium-high

Enjoyment factor: High

Suitability: Weekend warrior – pro

Safety: Medical centre on site

Session length: Adults 30 minutes, Kids 25 minutes

Groups: Three



TRISS SHARP

THE SCRAMBLES HERO AND ISDT GOLD MEDALLIST
FILLS US IN ON AN EXTRAORDINARY CAREER...

Words by **Andy Westlake**

Photos by **Gordon Francis, Ron Custard and Sam Haslam**

A cold spring Sunday in March 1961 is not a day that will go down in the annals of world history but for an eight year old from Somerset it would shape the rest of his life. It's the day I journeyed to Dorset's Bulbarrow Hill in the back of my big brother Rod's ex GPO three-speed Morris Eight van and one that is forever and indelibly engrained in my brain.

The roar of engines, the aroma of the burnt Castrol R, the vibration from the thundering speeding wheels plus the taste of the hot dogs from the Cherry's catering van brewed together into an intoxicating cocktail called scrambling.

The names of many of the riders were known to me from my weekly diet of motorcycling supplied courtesy of *The Motor Cycle* but now here they were roaring by a matter of feet away. The dashing Bryan 'Badger' Goss forever on the back wheel of his Greeves, the brothers Rickman on their gleaming white Metisse, our local man Graham Wiggins on a screaming DOT but the man who impressed me most of all and became my boyhood hero, Triss Sharp and his immaculate Triumph special.

Fast forward 54 years and the lad who used to fly around a field with a number 71 emblazoned across his push bike still has crystal clear memories of that effortless riding style and beautiful rasping Triumph twin. It was therefore a great privilege to visit Triss and his wife Pat at their home overlooking Poole harbour where we spent a nostalgic afternoon reliving some of those halcyon days when scrambling was king.

At any Southern or Wessex centre meeting during that era you could usually guarantee a winner wearing a 70-something across his machine as there was a sextet of international class riders. It usually read Triss' younger

brother Bryan 70, Triss 71, Jerry Scott 72, Derek and Don Rickman 73 and 74 and Ivor England 75 and referred to collectively by Jerry's father Len as 'the roaring seventies'.

That Triss and Bryan should take to motorcycle sport was not a surprise as in the 1920s their father Triss Snr was a top class leg trailing rider aboard a Douglas. He was captain of both New Cross and Crystal Palace speedway teams although as his son told me their first machine was of a rather more modest nature.

"The war was over, I guess must have been about 13 or 14 and dad decided it was time for me to have my first bike so he made one powered by a lawn mower engine which Bryan and I rode around the garden."

It wasn't long before Triss had fully explored the speed potential of the 'garden special' but in the days prior to schoolboy events had to wait until he was 16 and his scrambles debut. The Easter Friday meeting at Matchams Park heralded not only the start of spring but also the beginning of the scrambles season and it was here in April 1950 that Triss first came under starters orders aboard a 125cc James. Not that he set the world on fire with his race baptism.

"To say that the James was slow was an understatement, it struggled to get up some of the steep climbs and by the time I'd completed my first lap Eric Cheney had lapped me. Eric was well known to me because when I left school I joined Homesteads as an apprentice mechanic and I was put to work under him. He was a real stickler when it came to cleaning and preparation and my first job every Monday morning was to wash and polish his scrambler after the weekend. And it didn't end at a quick hose down as he had me cleaning every fin with newspaper!"

This obviously stood Triss in good stead

because in later years the hallmark of both his and Bryan's bikes were their immaculate preparation and amazing reliability. At every opportunity Triss was either racing or practicing, some times with disastrous results like when he decided to 'field test' a customers Zundapp across the local heath land and returned it to Homesteads in a very sorry state – an escapade he was lucky not to lose his job over!

He was starting to get on the pace in scrambles and also notched up his first win in a trial, the Sunbeam two-stroke cup which his brother Bryan would keep in the family by winning the following year. 1952 was memorable as by now Triss had progressed to an ex Arthur Wheeler Triumph Tiger 70 complete with a McCandless rear swinging arm which saw him make his debut on foreign soil.

"Arthur Lambert had arranged for Derek Rickman and me to ride at Montreuil which was an old chalk pits situated in the suburbs of Paris. We loaded our bikes onto the boat train at Weymouth which took us to Paris and we then rode the bikes from our hotel to the track, competed in the scramble and then back to the station for the return trip. There were thousands lining the circuit which featured a huge 20 foot drop known as 'Le Grand decent', I can't remember too much about the race other than I fell off but Derek had a good ride and finished well up on the leader board."

Like most of his peers work was interrupted for the obligatory two years National service although fortunately it didn't upset his motorcycling activities too much.

"I was stationed with a night fighter squadron based at Badgate and was given a roster which included weekends – this would have put the kibosh on racing but after I saw the CO I managed to get someone to change with me so scrambling continued virtually unhindered."

By now both brothers were on works Dots and along with team-mates Terry Cheshire and Bill Baraugh were starting to show the potential of the little two strokes in scrambles with some memorable victories. Back home in 'Civvy Street' Triss returned to his job at Homesteads before taking up a new position with Bob Fosters and some more antics, this time with a customer's Messerschmitt.

"With a separate set of points which opened slightly before TDC the Schmitt's engine would run in reverse using all four gears so theoretically it was possible to go as fast both forwards and back. A couple of us decided to put it to the test but the steering which was twitchy going forwards was absolutely deadly in reverse and in no time at all we were on two wheels and in great danger of tipping over. We over-corrected and went up the road going from front wheel to front wheel until we eventually managed to bring the Schmitt to a stop!"

By now Triss' silky smooth riding style was attracting other factory attentions and in 1955 he got his first works Francis Barnett. A standard Barnett would only turn out a fairly modest 8bhp and two-stroke tuning was still very much a 'dark art' but compared to the opposition the Sharps' bikes fairly flew. This was largely attributed to the skilled hands of their father 'Pops' who was held in high esteem in racing circles for his meticulous preparation and he managed to extract an extra 25 per cent of power out of the little Franny B.

Not only did the Barnett's bring Triss numerous scrambles wins it also rewarded him with the first of his four ISDT gold medals when in 1958 it was centred on Garmisch in the Bavarian Alps. For the British the event proved to be disastrous as they lost men from both vase teams on the first day and Trophy man Brian Martin with a dead ignition on his Gold star on the second. Perhaps the writing was on the wall because by way of comparison the Czech's entered 20 two-stroke mounted riders and all finished on gold!

But 17 British gold medals were won including Triss and Bryan on their works Francis Barnetts and Brian Stonebridge on the factory Greeves 6 LHK. Francis Barnett were delighted with the achievements of their riders and in recognition presented the brothers with sets of gold cuff links for their endeavours.

For many of course Triss' name became synonymous with his superbly prepared Triumphs, an association which started in 1956 when both he and Bryan were signed up by Ivor Davies to ride the factory twins. Although they were works bikes he was given free rein to carry out his own modifications and improvements as he explained.

"The Triumph frame had a tendency to flex so like many I changed it for one from a BSA. Over a period of time I carried out numerous modifications and the definitive version featured an Ariel rear swinging arm, Norton forks and Manx twin leading shoe front brake, BSA gearbox, Triumph clutch complete with rubber cush-drive, seat from a Greeves and carried the oil in the frame. It was still a weighty beast and tipped the scales at around 330lb which was quite a handful especially as I was only about nine stone. The standard brakes were pretty marginal so I fitted a Manx twin leading shoe which I got from Ray Petty via Eric Cheney and cost me a whopping £100! Under race conditions the Norton forks would soon bottom out so we would use the thickest oil possible to maintain some form of damping – when cold it was like treacle!"

Following the arrival of Brian Stonebridge at Greeves in January 1957 the reputation of the bikes from Thundersley flourished and a network of dealerships and area representatives was set up. In 1959 'Pop' Sharp was appointed





as Greeves' southern area representative and shortly afterwards a pair of works machines arrived for Triss and Bryan. This heralded the start of a successful six year association between the Sharps and Greeves in both scrambles and the ISDT and included many memorable highlights although Triss has particularly fond memories of winning the 100 mile scramble at Pirbright in 1961.

"As you can imagine the event was absolutely knockering and called for good support and back up from the pit crew for refuelling and the like. As an incentive the organisers not only paid prize money for winning they also awarded money for lap leadership and I went away from the meeting with £72 in my pocket. Pat and I were saving up to get married at the time so it bought our first cooker."

Continued success on both the works Greeves and Triumphs allied to his obvious mechanical skills saw Triss courted by the embryonic Bultaco Company and his appearance in the first Spanish GP.

"Bultaco were keen to get involved with scrambling and were looking for both some technical help and top riders for the first big international race in Spain. I believe they had initially contacted the ACU who put them in touch with several manufacturers including Greeves who agreed to offer assistance. A group of us including Don Rickman, Mike Jackson, Ian Horsell, Dave Curtis and myself were flown out to Madrid a week or so before the event where we tested the bikes."

"Don had already done quite a bit of development work but it was early days for them and the power characteristics were all wrong, there was no torque and although fast they were more like a road racer than a scrambler and the suspension was very poor. The race itself was held on an old golf course near the centre of Barcelona and watched by a crowd of about 40,000. Don came first on a 175cc Bultaco followed by Ian Horsell, Mike Jackson and myself and the crowd went absolutely wild – scrambling had arrived in Spain."

Despite his works rider status there was no fancy race transporters for Triss and the bikes were taken to meetings in the back of his pick-ups. Firstly a Morris Minor although later he progressed to a Vanguard which was eventually replaced by a Jaguar and a trailer which faithfully carried him to meetings all across the UK and to the continent. He was in demand by continental race organisers and during his career raced in France, Holland, Italy and Germany where by the mid-'60s could command £100 in start money.

The hallmark of any Sharp bike was its immaculate preparation and in more than a decade of racing the Triumph Triss only had one retirement when a magneto failed. Of course there were other retirements through crashes and injuries some of which were quite spectacular and ended up with a visit to the local hospital as he explained.

"I had several falls but undoubtedly the worst two were in the Isle of Man when I fell and broke my shoulder and an early one at Wells which resulted in a broken arm. The Wells track featured a very fast downhill with a cross course ridge, I was going like the clappers on a Goldie when I lost the front end and the resulting injury kept me out of action for the best part of a year."

At the end of 1959 Triumph withdrew their works support but the Sharps retained their factory machines and continued to develop them. Triss was particularly formidable in the mud and this had much to do with the low down grunt his bike developed which stemmed from a trip to California that Bryan made in the winter of 1960/61.

Greeves were keen to develop the lucrative American market and invited him to take part in a series of desert races, hare and hounds and motocross events that included the famous 'Big Bear' meeting. The young Sharp showed his class and won seven races in the short season and while he was there encountered both Steve McQueen and Bud Ekins.

Steve offered Bryan a part as a BMW riding German soldier in the film 'The Great Escape'

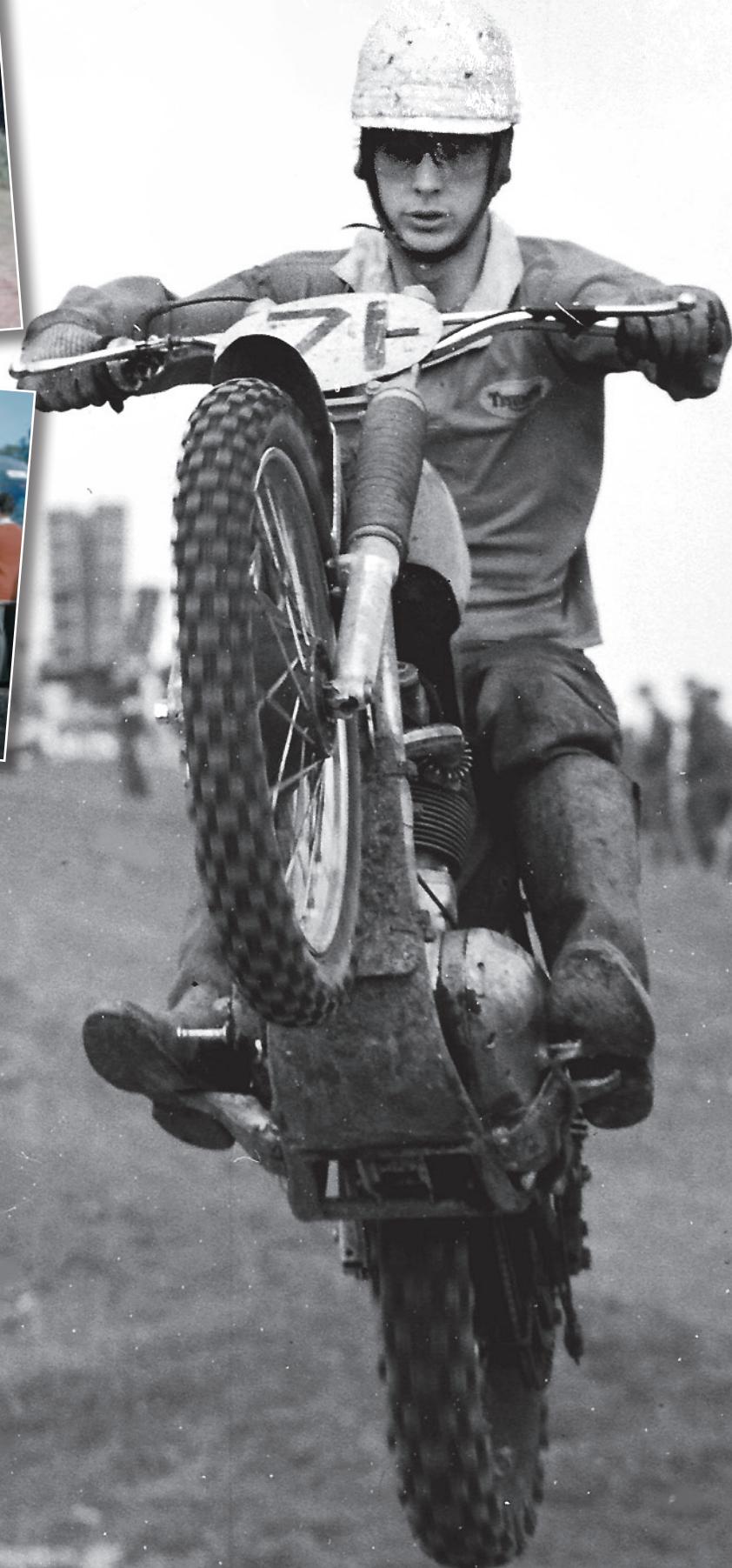
but concerned that it might be in breach of his contact with Greeves he had to turn it down. Steve and Bud were well known for their enthusiasm of Triumphs and what Bryan did bring back were some special cams which when fitted into Triss' scrambler really made it fly.

Not only did Triss notch up numerous scrambles wins for Greeves they also took him to three more ISDT Golds although these events were not without their incidents, disappointments or controversies.

For the event in Austria in 1960 not only did the riders have to overcome the usual hazards of streams, mountain passes and forest tracks they also had a major problem of spectator traffic. Riding for the British Trophy team Triss was in collision with a private motorcyclist and although both were unhurt the local police decided that action should be taken and pending prosecution impounded the Greeves rider's passport.

Some time after the trial had finished Triss was given his freedom and a suspended sentence for 'endangering human life'. More Gold came in '62 but this was sandwiched between two retirements. In 1961 the Greeves sheared the gearbox mainshaft on day two and in 1963 in Czechoslovakia things quickly went from bad to worse when on day one his works two-stroke steadfastly refused to start. It wouldn't respond to the kickstarter and after bumping it into life his trial only lasted five miles when it locked up solid. Whether it was the low grade petrol or an undetected lack of oil the reason is not known but for Triss it was over and an early return home along with Gordon Blakeway who had also retired.

Not only did 1964 see Hollywood in the east when Steve McQueen, Bud Ekins and the American team entered the first event to be held in East Germany it also saw both Sharps win Gold. The final special test was once again the speed test and for many the highlight. They witnessed Triss and Bryan dice neck and neck for the whole of the 30 minutes on their Challenger-engined bikes which proudly



brought Greeves the manufacturer's team prize. The following year saw the International in the Isle of Man but sadly no repeat of the glory from 12 months earlier.

"The weather was absolutely atrocious with the island being battered by the tail end of hurricane Betsy. It rained incessantly and in places visibility was down to a matter of a few yards. After manhandling our bikes out of bogs and mud holes all of the riders were soaking wet and totally dispirited. It was absolutely knackering just trying to keep going and by the end of the day it was all you could do to pick up a knife and fork. Compared to the back up the Eastern Europeans were getting like hot drinks and dry clothing ours was extremely poor – some times you would get to a check and there was nothing!"

There was a general feel of dissent towards the ACU for not looking after the British riders better and at the end of the third day Triss, Bryan and Pete Stirland decided enough was enough and retired. The daily newspapers reported somewhat sensationally that three British riders had been 'sacked' but this was a total fabrication and conveniently disregarded the awful weather conditions or the inferior back up that our teams received. It also glossed over the fact that from the original 299 starters only 82 stayed the course and only 18 of these achieved gold!

For Triss the controversy signalled the end of his days as a works Greeves rider and it was also his last International Six Days but he was still a force to be reckoned with on the West Country scramble tracks. He continued to race for another three years on a very quick 650cc Triumph-engined Wasp but at the end of 1968 he eventually called it a day – the Wasp was sold to Frank Underwood and the distinctive green helmet was hung up for the last time.

It brought the curtain down on 19 action packed seasons and for those of us who were lucky enough to see number 71 in action during that golden era the memories of that blue-tanked Triumph twin and its rasping exhaust note will live forever.

FOREST



FAT LIVERS

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY
YOU'RE IN FOR A REAL TREAT - WELL, YOU
ARE IF YOU'RE RIDING SOMETHING FROM
THE 2016 EXC RANGE...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

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*The big smokers suit
Wakker's big frame*

»»» **S**ticking with – and tweaking – what they know will work, KTM have lined up a largely tried, tested, trusted and tweaked range of enduro bikes for 2016. Can this be a bad thing? We took a refresher course in the art of woods riding with the orange crew and their range of mighty machines...



»»» WALKER'S WORDS THE BIG FELLA SUMS THINGS UP...

To round up on the KTM 2016 Enduro range I would have to say that giving the models a few tweaks of improvement and leaving the positive things alone is sometimes for the best and if these bikes didn't change for another few years I know the bikes would never become negative.

Let's be honest, maybe, just maybe, the bikes could stay the same for a while longer and maybe the price of all dirt bikes could drop to get even more bums on seats in our great sport. Just a thought...



With plenty of bikes available to grip n' rip Geoff was pumped to get some riding done



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500 EXC

The big boy of the range is an incredibly smooth operator and the power delivery on this bike is a favourite of mine especially on open trails. This bike will operate in tighter confines too but it really comes to life when the open country is talking to you.

This bike is fast, very fast, but it will look after you in technical going if you aren't in too much of a hurry. The more you ride this bike the more you learn to appreciate just how tall a gear it will pull thanks to the large amount of torque this bike produces with only the slightest roll of the throttle.



350 EXC-F

If you want an all-rounder then the 350 needs no introduction as the standard 'everyman' bike. It's a very versatile and user friendly bike with enough power for its competition class at pretty much all levels of riding and racing. The power delivery is there in an instant from the first heart beat of the now well developed and reliable motor to the top where this bike will sign off just at the point where the power reaches its maximum before running out.

The fuel injection is very noticeable on the 350 as the instantaneous delivery as you open the throttle is almost too instant and when I took a trip off piste the response from the motor was to spin the rear wheel up rather than drive the bike forward. In this middle ground of engine capacity I truly believe a good old fashioned carburettor would give a better feeling from this amazing motor.



450 EXC

The 450 motor has retained the more friendly nature we've come to expect in recent years rather than the aggressive power output earlier models produced. The roll on power of the 2016 model gives the impression that it's developing more bhp than the 500 but that's because it's much faster revving than its big brother and has a lighter feel due to the motor spinning up and getting into its stride much faster. In turn this can make you smile and with the slightly lower torque output than the 500 you can rear wheel steer the bike. Overall it gives the 450 EXC more of a racing feel than the 500 which feels more like a trail bike by comparison.



250 EXC-F

The smallest of the four-stroke range offers the most fun you can have on an off-road bike. This bike at times can feel overwhelming in its power delivery but when you rev it hard then you can have an immense amount of fun. This is the nature of any lower capacity dirt bike but the trust the factory have in the mechanical strength of this engine is great. The bike will rev hard and keep the traction coming through the rear wheel even with the lack of grip from the stock Maxxis tyres.

The forks are improved over last year. They blow through their stroke but let's be honest, these bikes are designed to work with a very diverse range of riders and the forks will only go into meltdown if you are reaching speeds where you already know you will require personalisation of your suspension for full-on racing.

Every four-stroke will try to push the front end into and through a turn. This is the nature of the beast. When you bear this in mind I can see why KTM go for a soft approach up front as this allows the bike to turn quicker. Some high speed stability is lost with this setup but I am sure the engineers in orange have worked out the trade off deal.



125 EXC

There are miles of fun to be had with the smallest capacity machine of the KTM enduro family. This bike is great fun and does all you can expect and indeed more with its capacity. The power is of course found higher up in the rev range but there is useable torque down very low.

The bike was jetted well on our test day which allowed a good test as it was possible to roll the power on to see what the bike was capable of when running clean. To make acceptable low down power from any 125 is good work but it is the transfer to the mid range which is most impressive from the little motor. This smooth transfer (for a 125) is great and will allow younger, developing riders to get the best out of this bike on the various terrain of the UK.



250 EXC

The 250 EXC has always been a strong bike and this has not changed. The power is pretty linear with good transfer through the bottom, mid and top range. The 250 classic characteristic of a little punch coming from bottom to mid range is normal and this can be handled and used to great effect by a rider once they are used to it.

There is nothing scary about the delivery of the power on the 250 but it does demand respect to extract the most fun. If you have one of these bikes, the more time you spend on it the more in tune you will become to finding its absolute best. The fun in this bike is its ability to cruise along fully content before rolling its sleeves up and giving you some when you require its higher performance.

The chassis works very well with this motor delivery but with the power output the back end can get loose as a goose which for the most part puts a massive smile on my massive chops.... Good times!

200 EXC

This is turning into one of my personal favourite bikes of all time... Even though I am a large framed man I have always liked the 200 as a motor capacity. The 2016 200 is the best I have ridden. This bike makes so much power it's insane. There was nothing lacking in any department and I could not believe just how fast it was.

This bike as a package is great. Even with my size I felt comfortable and fast on the bike which is nice when it is delivering smooth power and the best handling of every bike in the range.

The weight of this bike coupled with its almost perfect power delivery made the chassis feel like it was designed around this concept and capacity. From the moment we took to the track this bike just worked in every way.

I cannot say it was a surprise but for the time I spent on the bike with the carburetion dialled, suspension working great with only a little stiffening on the front fork clickers and the requirement for the bike to be ridden fast I was stunned by the overall package the 200 delivered on the test day. Stable, light, fast and with the best balance of the range. Bravo the 200 EXC



300 EXC

This is another fantastic overall package from KTM. From the dawn of its time the 300 has delivered smooth and mostly controllable power to literally scale any heights as proven year after year in extreme enduros around the world.

This is pretty much the weapon of choice for the pro extreme racer and with its no nonsense approach to getting the power to the rear wheel it makes for a traction engine style through its high level of torque production. This bike pulls smooth from sub zero and will keep finding grip until you, as a rider open the throttle too much. Basically, this bike can give you a helping hand if you treat it correctly. This is all you can ask from your pride and joy and with the 300 you have a bike which will do absolutely everything with no stress.

This bike is incredibly easy to ride but also packs enough punch to take you well past any turning point due to its incredible ability to get up to warp speed in the blink of an eye. The suspension works well on the 300 with the two-stroke fun and flickable feel still well in evidence although it begins to feel softer in the front like its four-stroke family members due to the weight which is of course expected with the bigger motor. As with the other bikes the positioning and controls are all great with comfort and rideability being the name of the game.

TECH SPECS

125 EXC

Displacement: 124.8cc
 Bore and stroke: 54 x 54.5mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36S AG
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.471 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 355mm
 Seat height: 960mm
 Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres
 Weight: 94kg

200 EXC

Displacement: 193cc
 Bore and stroke: 64 x 60mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36S AG
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.471 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 355mm
 Seat height: 960mm
 Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres
 Weight: 99.5kg

250 EXC

Displacement: 249cc
 Bore and stroke: 66.4 x 72mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36S AG
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.482 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 355mm
 Seat height: 960mm
 Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres
 Weight: 101.9kg

300 EXC

Displacement: 293.2cc
 Bore and stroke: 72 x 72mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36S AG
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.482 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 355mm
 Seat height: 960mm
 Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres
 Weight: 102.1kg

250 EXC-F

Displacement: 249.1cc
 Bore and stroke: 78 x 52.3mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.482 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 345mm
 Seat height: 970mm
 Fuel capacity: 9 litres
 Weight: 105.5kg

350 EXC-F

Displacement: 349.7cc
 Bore and stroke: 88 x 57.5mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.482 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 345mm
 Seat height: 970mm
 Fuel capacity: 9 litres
 Weight: 107.2kg

350 EXC-F ENGINE



450 EXC

Displacement: 449.3cc
 Bore and stroke: 95 x 63.4mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.482 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 345mm
 Seat height: 970mm
 Fuel capacity: 9 litres
 Weight: 111kg

500 EXC

Displacement: 510.4cc
 Bore and stroke: 95 x 72mm
 Transmission: 6 gears
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI
 Front suspension: WP-USD 48mm
 Rear suspension: WP-PDS
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/335mm
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
 Wheel base: 1.482 ± 10mm
 Ground clearance: 345mm
 Seat height: 970mm
 Fuel capacity: 9 litres
 Weight: 111.5kg

450/500 EXC ENGINE





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SPOTLIGHT ON...

BRADD LEE TIMMIS #589

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With the 2015 Junior MX World Championships coming up at El Molar in Spain on July 18/19 it's hard to imagine just how good it must feel to be one of the selected riders getting the ACU nod. In the Junior 65s British Youth Nationals high fliers Vinnie Guthrie and Alfie Jones top the selection. Third placed championship runner Charlie Heyman gives Spain a swerve as Morgan Evans, Raife Broadley and Bradd Lee Timmis complete the squad.

For one guy in particular this is something of an amazing dream come true as Bradd only started any kind of racing in November 2013. Yep that's right just 18 months after coming into the sport as an absolute beginner and with just 12 months national experience Bradd finds himself lining up with the Worlds very best.

Rage: Hi Bradd, massive congratulations on your selection. Did it come as big surprise?

BLT: "Yes, it really was a big surprise and we have had to change a few plans around."

Rage: What's the new plan then?

BLT: "I had already been out practising on an

85 – getting ready for a move up in September – but once the call came all that had to stop to fully concentrate on the 65 – especially with hardpack training. We are cramming in as many sessions with trainer Richard-Mike Jones and in preparation for the stifling heat we might have to deal with we have been to see fitness trainer Alan Milway at Birmingham University."

Rage: Are you enjoying the physical training too?

BLT: "Yeah, I enjoy it all and some of my results have been really good in tests. My core strength test they had to do four times as they couldn't quite believe the results – equal to a fully grown adult Alan Milway said."

Rage: Following the British Youth Nationals event at Pontrilas will it be flat out training for a month before Spain or do you have racing?

BLT: "There will be as much practise as possible but a week before Spain we're at the Master Kids event in France. That hopefully should be perfect practice with heat and track conditions and we are half way to Spain too – it fits in just right."

Rage: Has your school been following your MX progress?

BLT: "Yes they have. I go to Weston Coyney and my teacher Mr Knight is always interested in how I get on and as long as my grades are good they give me time off for MX."

Rage: Coming into MX comparatively late what's been the easiest and the hardest thing to get used to?

BLT: "Speed is the easiest thing as I've never been afraid to go fast, but with different tracks to learn it's the changing technique that's more difficult. Some times it might be day two of a National before I feel just right – I know I really have to work on this."

Rage: Looking back over your National results so far this year where have you performed best?

BLT: "In the BYN my best result was fifth overall at Haverigg and my highest race finish has been a fourth at Haverigg and then also at Pontrilas. In the Route 77 series my best individual race was a third place finish at round four."



Rage: Looking ahead after the world finals is that you done with 65cc racing?

BLT: "In this country as soon as the Nationals finish I will move up to 85cc but next year we are really thinking about racing b/w 65s in Europe. I'm still small enough to get the most out of a 65 and with the extra experience I gain I really think I will have a chance of doing well."

Rage: Final words to dad Antony... How are you looking forward to Spain and how do you see Bradd's time ahead in MX?

AT: "Being Bradd's first year in top competition we haven't set any goals for Spain as Bradd knows full well the talent he's up against. At this point we are just happy to be invited. 12 months ago we would never have thought it.

"Although qualifying would be great we know there are plenty of family's out there that have the same goals in MX but we have a lot of confidence in Bradd to get where he wants to be. He just needs the time and commitment of people like RMJ and Alan Milway and the sponsors he has."



THE STORY SO FAR...

MX NATIONALS MIDSEASON MOP UP...

This years NX Nationals have so far been absolutely amazing and have delivered more than its fair share of stand out shows. Taking a look back at the previous four rounds, a fair few of those stand out moments have come in the Berkshire Cycles Small Wheel 85s from Team Green Kawasaki star Lewis Hall. That said, with three storming moto wins it was team buddie Joel Rizzi who shone brightest at the Preston Docks series opener. Hall, with one win, had to settle for podium second as taking third on the box Sam Nunn bested the rest in all four heats.

Rolling into Foxhill for round two Rizzi was out injured and by winning all four motos Hall laid down one of the best small wheel 85cc shows of recent years. Nunn and Louie Kessell completed the respective 1-2-3 and at Culham for round three it was Kessell upping his game even further as he took the challenge right to series leader Hall.

To be absolutely fair Hall was more than a bit battered and bruised from previous weeks efforts but taking nothing away from Kessell his two moto wins signalled his coming of age. Hall took the other two wins and top spot as Kessell just missed out on the overall by two points. With a season's best show Preston Williams scooped third overall.

Down on the beach at Weston, round four signalled a return to action for Joel Rizzi and he duly won moto one. After that though Rizzi picked up another war wound as Hall dominated yet again – ultimately Hall taking the overall going 2-1-1-1. For Nunn with three seconds on his card it meant runner up as Drew Kemp excelled in the tough conditions bagging podium third. As far as the championship title goes Hall has a 94 point lead over Kessell who is trying to fend off the attentions of Sam Nunn. In the Berkshire Cycles biggies – and hoping to make it a Monster Energy Kawasaki double – Dylan Woodcock leads the title chase from Honda's Jack Bintcliffe. Kawasaki teamster Jed Etchells is still right in the hunt in series third with Ben Clark holding a strong fourth.

Hitting five moto wins so far last year's champion Woodcock has impressed to the max at times – nothing better than his epic and ultimately winning battle with Christopher Mills

at Foxhill. With European commitments Mills has only run two rounds but with four moto wins and four seconds he would surely have been a tough act to topple if in full contention. Completing the moto wins stats, Bintcliffe has nailed three, with Etchells and Harry Kimber pocketing one each. On the subject of Kimber – going 2-3-2-1 – he was in ripping good form at Culham snatching the overall but having competed in only two rounds so far he's out of title contention.

Going into the final two rounds of the Maxima MXY2 dust up Henry Williams is sitting on the biggest advantage of all – a 118 point lead over second placed Jamie Carpenter. Three overall wins with one runner up finish carding seven moto victories means Williams (Feehily MX) could be exiting his youth days with his finest hour there for the taking.

Battling through a real tough time at round two, Carpenter on the Phenix Tools Ifly Husky has one moto win to his name. Carpenter's a real scrapper and with the next four behind all within close striking distance he's going to need all that grit keeping them at bay. Elsewhere in the section there's been two moto wins apiece for Joe Jeffries, Henry Siddiqui and Luke Smith. Robbie Dowson and Jay Hague have picked up one a piece – and a special word for Alexander Brown as he holds series fourth having rode the wheels off his 125cc smoker at times. Also a big shout out for Ollie Osmaston turning it on with podium success at the first three rounds as he opts to go in the Adult Bell Experts Cup.

SERIES STANDINGS

Berkshire Cycles SW85s

- 1 Lewis Hall 382, 2 Louie Kessell 288,
- 3 Sam Nunn 267, 4 Drew Kemp 236,
- 5 Dylan Woodhall 211, 6 Preston Williams 184

Berkshire Cycles BW85s

- 1 Dylan Woodcock 339, 2 Jack Bintcliffe 311,
- 3 Jed Etchells 285, 4 Ben Clark 264,
- 5 Rossi Beard 226, 6 Christopher Mills 188

Maxima MXY2

- 1 Henry Williams 361, 2 Jamie Carpenter 243,
- 3 Joe Jefferies 240, 4 Alexander Brown 235,
- 5 Henry Siddiqui 232, 6 Josh Coleman 222

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Eddie Jay Wade is hunting down the series lead in the SW85cc class

Dylan Woodcock has a nightmare in Pontrilas



WET N' DRY!

MIXED CONDITIONS AT PONTRILAS TEST THE BRITISH YOUTH NATIONALS BOYS N' GIRLS TO THE MAX...

Photos by Ray Chuss

Following a rain delayed start round three of the British Youth Nationals held at Pontrilas developed into a real cracker.

In the 65s Vinnie Guthrie ended up on top with a 1-1-1-1-1-2 scorecard over the two days of racing to extend his series lead to 29 points. The other moto was won by Alfie Jones who currently sits second overall in the championship standings while Charlie Heyman, Morgan Evans, Ben Pratt, Raife Broadley and Arai Elcock round out the top six.

Coming into Pontrilas as the SW85cc championship leader but also carrying an ankle injury meant Kacey Hird really had his work cut out. Main title contender Eddie Jay Wade was never going to make things easy anyhow and with an almost perfect weekend win going 1-1-4-1-2-1 EJW reduced the gap at the top even further. Ending up in podium second and third respectively Hird and Lewis Hall plundered the missing heat wins as MBO runner Ike Carter beat off both Joel Rizzi and Sam Nunn taking fourth overall.

There were fireworks at the top in the BW 85s as Euro fighter Christopher Mills dropped in to take the overall victory as series leader Dylan Woodcock (Team Green Monster Kawasaki) had a bit of a nightmare. Two wins and four seconds did the job nicely for the Mills bomb while Harry Kimber made it to second on the podium and takes the championship lead.

TM speedster Callum Gasson's superb day

one effort helped him into podium third as Dan Bewley, Dominic Lancett and Jed Etchells completed the top six. Team Green star Etchells actually carded a winning brace with victory in heats five and six but two crashes on day one kept him down the overall standings.

In the championship standings it's now a Hardcore Racing double at the top as Tom Grimshaw took seventh overall but hangs on to series second just seven points behind teammate Kimber. Previous leader Dylan Woodcock had what must be his worst National result for many years. A ruinous day one in particular ultimately saw him drop to 11th overall and series third.

In the top two divisions Alexander Brown 125s and Jordan Eccles Youth Open continue to dominate although it has to be said in the midst of disappointingly low start line numbers once again.

In the 11-strong smoker class Callum Green nailed qualification pole and the opening race win. It was then Oliver Benton who scooped heat two but with a final card reading 2-2-1-2-1 it was Brown who extended his series lead in some style. Benton took the heat five win and he was still in with a shout going into the Sunday closer but a crash and mid pack finish meant he had to settle for second overall.

In the Youth Open it was more or less a repeat of the previous round as runaway leader Eccles hit podium top with five from six wins.

George Grigg Pettitt grabbed the other heat win and third overall as Irish raider Luke Smith picked up nothing but solid second and third places which resulted in him getting podium second.

SERIES STANDINGS

65cc

- 1 Vinnie Guthrie 747, 2 Alfie Jones 718,
- 3 Charlie Heyman 651, 4 Morgan Evans 633,
- 5 Raife Broadley 626, 6 Ben Pratt 597

SW85

- 1 Kacey Hird 1051, 2 Eddie Jay Wade 1046,
- 3 Sam Nunn 976, 4 Lewis Hall 974,
- 5 Louie Kessell 946, 6 Joel Rizzi 942

BW85

- 1 Harry Kimber 1011, 2 Tom Grimshaw 1004,
- 3 Dylan Woodcock 993, 4 Calum Mitchell 956,
- 5 Ben Clark 951, 6 Callum Gasson 943

Youth 125cc

- 1 Alexander Brown 795, 2 Oliver Benton 753,
- 3 Callum Green 695, 4 Dee-Jay Walker 686,
- 5 Troy Willerton 619, 6 Jack Camwell 618

Youth Open

- 1 Jordan Eccles 776, 2 Luke Smith 719,
- 3 George Grigg Pettitt, 4 Robbie Dowson 685,
- 5 Joe Hodgson 640, 6 Jay Lamb 624



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JORDAN ECCLES

OUR RAGE COLUMNIST IS IN A REFLECTIVE MOOD AND LOOKS BACK AT THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF THE YEAR SO FAR...

Photo by Darryl Howell

I thought I would take this opportunity to look back over the season so far and reflect on the highs and lows, which to be fair, have been pretty high in places but pretty low in others.

At the beginning of the season I was on a big high, all deals had been done and along with some of my long term sponsors that have been very loyal to me over the years, some new and exciting sponsors had come on board and everything was looking good. Pre-season testing had gone very well and I was feeling extremely positive.

However, everything then changed when a crash at the first round of the MX Nationals brought with it a wrist injury that put me out for a few weeks. This coincided with the first round of the Maxxis MXY2 championship where although going along and trying to ride it was all just too painful and I failed to finish any of the races.

However, onwards and upwards, lots of training, lots of practicing and certainly lots of staying very positive and believing that everything would come good again soon.

Since coming back to fitness all of the highs

have basically surrounded the British Youth Nationals and all of the lows have mainly been around the Maxxis MXY2 championship, which is extremely frustrating to say the least. I currently have a 57 point lead in the British Youth Nationals championship with two rounds to go and have taken the top podium step at all of the rounds so far.

However, at the time of going to press I have just come home from the third round of the Maxxis MXY2 championship where things did not quite go to plan. The track at Blaxhall Pits was awesome and a real spectacle. It is a very fast track though, which at this level always makes passing difficult.

In the first two races, I could not get a good start for love nor money and in both races had to come from right at the back. I managed to make up good ground but by the time I managed to pull through the pack to any sort of decent position those in front had just pulled too big a gap.

In the final race, I managed to get my start sorted and gated in fourth and quickly moved up to third and felt that I was closing the gap on second. A little error unfortunately dropped me

back to fourth. However, a few small mistakes elsewhere, one of which resulted in a coming together with another rider and the next thing I knew I was down in midpack again. Not good and a very frustrating day as I definitely had the pace to run with the front guys.

Anyway, as I am in a reflective mood, I am starting to realise that it is important to always look for the positives. Even the greatest riders in the world have some tough times – just look at Ken Roczen, Tony Cairoli and Tommy Searle this year. I know that all riders have bad patches and at some point all riders generally have injuries they have to overcome, but to coin a phrase, it is all about the ‘bouncebackability’ in determining how we come out the other side.

So, to all the riders out there that are having a similar sort of season, hopefully we can all enjoy the highs and try our very best to learn lots from the lows.

Good luck to everybody in the remainder of the season and hopefully there will be far more highs than lows.

Jordan Eccles



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